BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING SEGA MAGAZINE

MEAN MACHIN SEG

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- MOTHERBASE
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EXCLUSIVE: JUDGE DREDD

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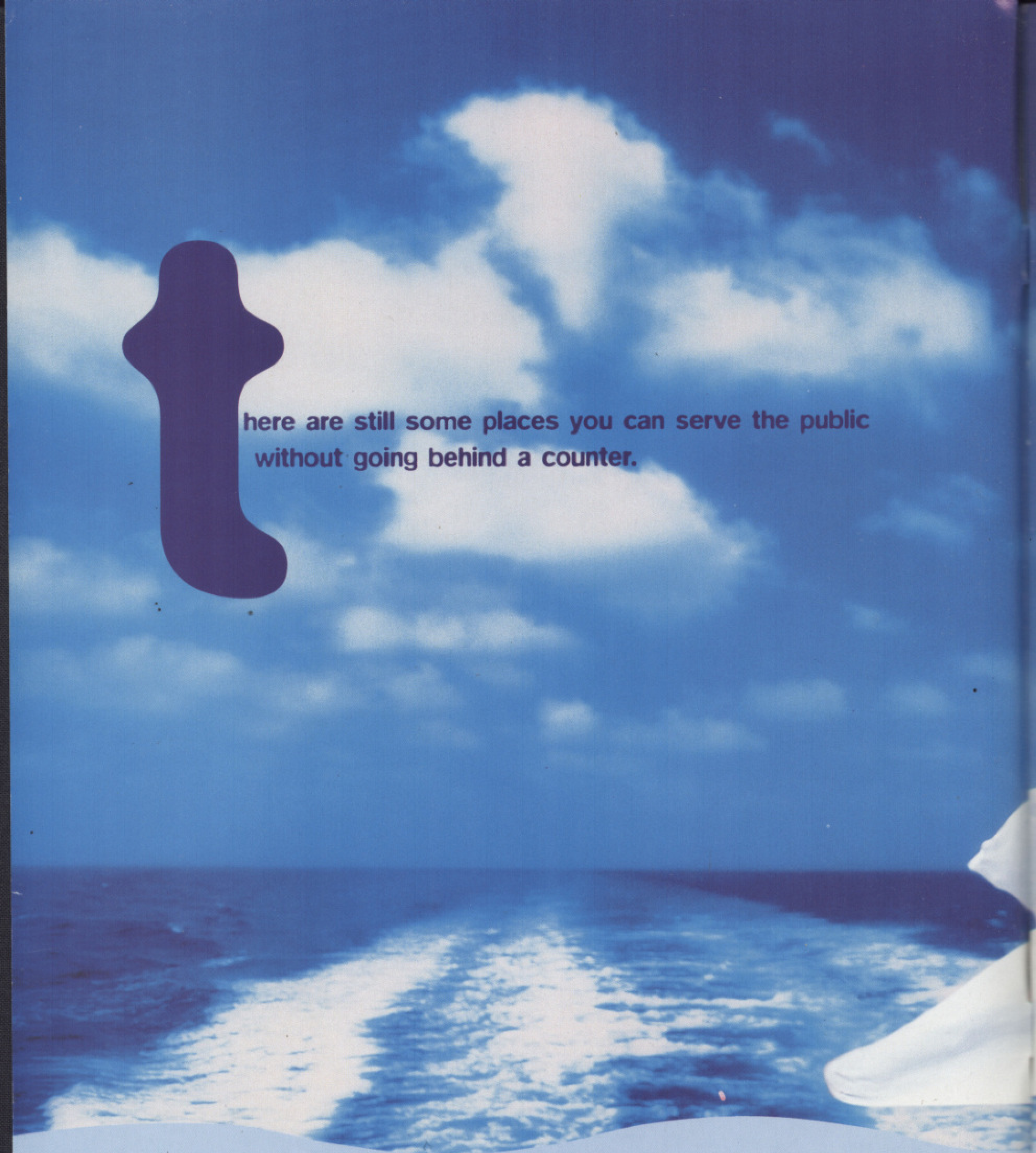
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CO

REGULARS

REVIEWS

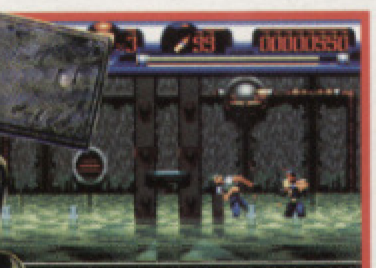
MEGADRIVE

COVER STORY 18



The story. The film. The game. The man. The Law. Fleetway's phenomenon which grew out of 2000 AD comic is ripped apart in this fantastic feature anticipating the Dredd mania set to hit the UK with Guild's movie and Acclaim's new game. We're not talking one or two shots here, we're talking inside knowledge of the rough code — and loads of screenshots. Oh yes.

EXCLUSIVE









NTENTS





EDITO

ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Fleetway for being great —
especially Steve and Dave Bishop. James Stuart as Probe.
Simon Smith-Wright — now, about those, films...
SPECIAL NO THANKS:
The illogical bunch and their paperwork.
COVER BY

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TV TRIVIA QUIZ CORNER: Nos 1 and 2:
1. Name the grubby doll in Play School.
2. Name the Caretaker in Take Hart.



Another month, another bumper MEAN MACHINES. We're a bit chuffed with this issue, I'm afraid. It's not us being smug (although we have been called Keen Machines one or twice), but we think we've managed to bring you the cream of the current Sega stock — and most of it first! As you may have guessed from our cover, Acclaim's Judge Dredd licence is our main scoop, and we unveil the first proper details of the game whilst taking a look at the film and the comics to get really behind what makes the character so special. Of course, another reason to be chuffed is the fantastic Mortal Kombat II sticker album you'll find with the mag — along with a pack of stickers to start your collection. And if these two major plus points are the bread of our Sega sandwich, the filling is every bit as tasty, with first looks at Sonic Drift II, Asterix II, Izzy's Quest and True Lies. But enough of these food comparisons, enjoy the mag ad get ready for next month's issue which will be every bit as good.
Steve

PHOTOS FOR CASH — THE NEW BREED!

Well, the mercenary in you has certainly come to the fore as our 'Cash For Photos' plumbs new depths in reader interaction. Quite remarkably, someone went to the trouble of finding a Power Ranger outfit — but dressed up in it themselves! Doh! Ah well, here's this month's bunch of money-grabbing miscreants...

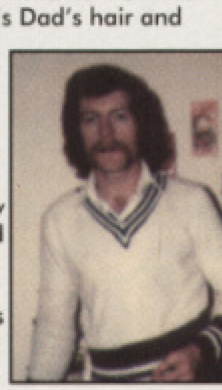


PARENT DRESSED AS A POWER RANGER

Yes! This is the one we wanted to see the most. Sadly, Emley's very own Andrew Twigge misread the brief and got garbed up himself instead of getting a parent to do it! Ah well, for looking such a pillock and being a good sport, we're going to send him £30 — next time, read the mag properly!

BAD HAIRCUT

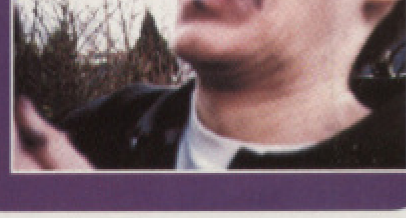
We don't know which is the worst. Gareth Walker's Dad's hair and 'tache or the crap arrangement of cards around that sparse chrimbo tree. Still, just for the audacity of that hair and visible chest fluff, we've upped Gareth's prize to a tenner. Nice one.



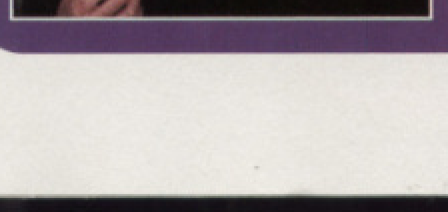
EATING WORM

Danny Grossman is our hero. No, really he is. Shown here in these pics is Dan (Grossman by name, gross man by nature) as he scours the garden for a large worm. he then puts it in his gob and — groooooaaah! — bites it. Needless to say, the worm was dead before he ate it (his breath killed it, no doubt), and we await Dan's return when we add 'eating dog crap' to the list. Until then, £35 is on its way to you me old mucker...





Colin Fleming steps up for the worm chores next, but doesn't come across as so hard. Come on, Col, you got your mum to wash it first didn't you? And we reckon you pulled it in half before putting it on your tongue. Still, we're as good as our word and £35 is on its way.



RIAL

PAUL BUFTON AT SCHOOL

YES! YES! YES! No, it isn't a young Dennis Waterman or the new Little Lord Fauntleroy, it's Paulie B at school. The sender wants to remain anonymous, and we'll grant that! Just look at that spangly T-shirt. Mmmmmmm! The tenner's on its way, our good, good pal...





HUMAN PYRAMID

Matthew Gregory and his mates win £45 for their human pyramid. We weren't exactly impressed with the git on top (who obviously suffers vertigo and wasn't man enough to stand on his mate's shoulders), but the rest of them can do him over later. By the way, the guy in the white T-shirt looks just like Paul B as a tot. We reckon, anyway.



DEERSTALKER HAT (WITH FLAPS DOWN)

Only a fiver on offer, but this saddo went for it. Somehow, though, we feel he got money for something he wears voluntarily. His name? Calum McCleod. Billy No-Mates, we reckon...



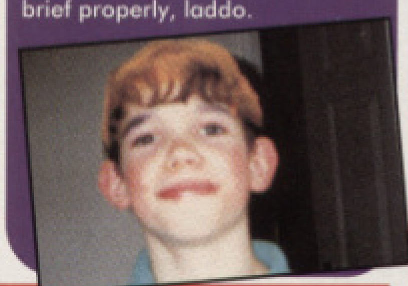


YOUNGER BROTHER BOUND AND GAGGED IN CUPBOARD

We had loads of entries for this one, but sadly we've lost the name of the guy responsible for this pic. Give us a bell and prove who you are and the tenner's yours...

HAIR DYED GREEN, EYE-BROWS PURPLE

A. Davies sent in loads of entries including a very staged 'KICK ME ON TEACHER' and 'BROTHER IN CUPBOARD', neither of which convinced the jury. Still, he made us laugh with this effort, but as his hair is yellow as opposed to green, we're deducting a fiver from his £15 prize. Read the brief properly, laddo.



THE LIST IN FULL...

We've removed a few of the older suggestions now as cross-dressing and eating worms is a bit passe. However, some inventive members of our readership should be able to cater for a few of the newies...

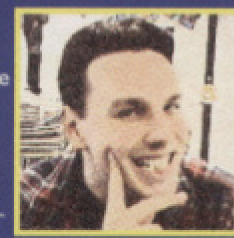
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WHERE WERE YOU WHEN...

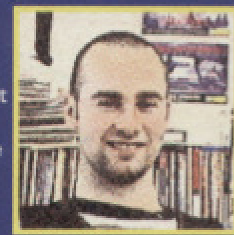
IT'S THE CULTURAL CONUNDRUM OF THE DECADE, THE JFK OF OUR GENERATION. THIS MONTH, DEAR READERS, WE ASK THE IMMORTAL QUESTION: WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU HEARD THAT LARRY GRAYSON HAD DIED?

STEVE



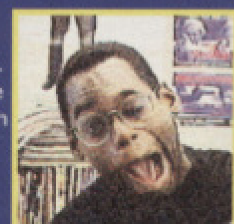
A big fan of fun-for-all-the-family camp comedy in all its forms, Steve was naturally the first meeber of the team to hear the heart-breaking news. "I was in bed early that fateful morning, watching the TV. Having heard of Mr Grayson's previous illness I was obviously extending my rough diamond East End sympathy to him." Upon hearing the worst had happened, Steve broke down. Sorry, we mean Steve broke wind. And went back to sleep.

GUS



The tragic event had more poignant repercussion for Gus. "It's uncanny," quoth he "I was just *shutting that door* and remarking upon *what a gay day* it was, but we should *look at the muck in here* whilst the dog was trying to, er...*chase me* er, no that's not right, erm... I mean it was *nice to see him to see him nice* on the telly, but it was a shame he'd died. Or something."

OZ



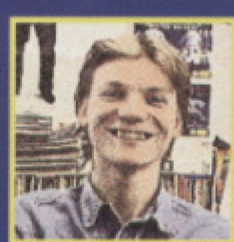
The shock of the comedy demise of the decade was doubled for Oz. "Where was I when who died?" he said."Larry Grayson? That one with the specs? 'E's not dead is 'e? Gor blimey get some kick some, as I live and breathe. Oo'd 'ave thought it, eh?" At this point Oz was ovrercome with emotion and asked to have the rest of the week off to nurse his psychological wounds. Again.

CLAIRE



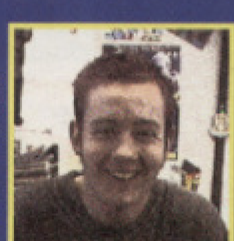
Claire has adopted a more level-headed approach top the tragedy. Her opinion is "Whilst I'm so very sad to see such a great talent pass from this earth, I have to temper my anguish with fond memories of his hilarious routines. To this end I taught my budgie, Budge, to say 'shut that door' – so I know the comic genius of Larry Grayson lives on in my aviary."

PAUL



It was a sad, sad day for poor old Pauly Paul when the Graysmeister popped his stack-heeled clogs. "I was standing on the bus reading some chap's paper over his shoulder when I read the news" he sobs, still obviously in pain "Thinking immediately of the sibling he left behind I gasped 'I feel so sorry for your sister'. At this point the owner of the paper, an aggressive football hooligan, turned around and beat me to a pulp. Boo hoo."

RAD



Having an astral link to the planes of high comedy, Rad suspected the truth even before the story broke. "I was watching Les Dennis on the telly, and I suddenly felt incredibly depressed. At first I thought it just the effects of suffering half an hour of a babbling fornicating ingrate hugging various members of nonplussed families, but now I see the truth – Larry himself wanted me to alert the world to his death." Yeees.

SCAVENGER

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

If you're the owner of a Megadrive 32X, you're probably a bit peeved at the moment. Sure, Star Wars, Doom and Virtua Deluxe were cool, but nothing else has really been worth a look. The shots on these pages should hopefully convince you that 32X has a very rosy future and can finally stand proud amongst the other 32-bit platforms.

The Scavenger teams, Zyrinx (Sub-Terrania, Red Zone) and newcomers Lemon, are taking the 32X into the future with a range of games that look frankly incredible. And if you think that the graphics here are astounding, you ought to see them move. Fast, smooth and incredibly impressive, we couldn't believe that these were just early demos. That's right - demos - the coders were keen to point out that the finished games will be even better than the visuals seen here. The obvious question must be: what do these teams know that every other 32X programmer doesn't?

Obviously it's something quite special and unique to the 32X hardware because the programmers also told MEAN MACHINES that if their routines were ported over to the Saturn, they wouldn't run as fast! Unbelievable stuff.

The first announced title from the Scavenger teams is Batman Forever for Acclaim — which we couldn't take pictures of, unfortunately, but believe us, it's well up to the standard of the demos seen here and should revolutionise 32X gaming when it's released at the end of the year.

After a good start and a very shaky second wave of software, it looks as though 32X has got a very bright future. Couple games of this quality with top-notch arcade conversions like Virtua Fighter and Wing War, it looks like 1995 (or at least the tail end of it) will be great for 32X owners.

DR WHO EFFECTS

These bizarre gas plasma effects zoom around and form some bizarre, very complex patterns. God only knows how Zyrinx will put this into a game (well, Zyrinx probably know as well). Superb.









ZYRINX

This distinguished band of Megadrive coders have moved on to the 32X and have created a whole suite of stunning graphics routines - and we've had access to all of them. So, sit back and relax - ready yourself for something





LEMON

Like Zyrinx, this talented team of 32X programmers hail from Denmark. Their first demo is a brilliant fractal based landscape which you can fly around at any incredibly swift speed. Some of the detail is frankly brilliant, most of all the military base you fly around.











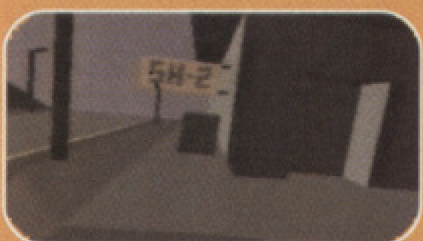
▲ *Soom you will be roaming across this.*

STUNS ON 32X

POLYGONS

If you thought that the graphics in Virtua Deluxe and Star Wars were a bit plain, take a look at this incredible journey through a polygon town. The detail, smoothness and speed are frankly astounding...





GOURAUD SHADING

Without slowing down the action at all, Zyrinx have created a smooth colour-graduated desert terrain - that's gouraud shading for you. The effect is excellent — far superior to any other 3D system







LENS FLARE

Any light source in the Zyrinx landscape is effectively blurred and distorted, creating a stunning lens flare effect - like on these streets lights for example.





TEXTURE MAPPING

There's just no stopping these Zyrinx chaps is there? Whilst the Doom coders had to put a big border around their texture-mapped landscape, this full-screen texture-mapped chasm activity runs at exactly the same speed as the ordinary polygon town. And check out that lens flare when you peer at the sun.







X-CELLENT!

- NEW GAME
- BY CAPCOM
- SATURN

Probably the biggest Saturn story to emerge from Japan this month was the announcement of the conversion of Capcom's X-Men coin-op. It further reinforces the Saturn's position as the machine that gets the games people want at home. The highly successful machine is a conventional one-on-one beat 'em up in the Street Fighter mode, but with some fantastic graphics, including truly massive sprites. Also, it's an X-Men fan's dream come true, with all the top characters using their powers to stunning effect as special moves. Still in early stages of development, prepare to join Wolverine, Silver Samurai, Cyclops, Magneto et al in the Autumn.







▲ *Arcade excellence becomes Saturn excellence.*

OCEAN'S MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

- NEW GAME
- BY OCEAN
- ALL FORMATS

With Tom Cruise starring in the new movie of the 60s classic series, Ocean have stepped in to secure the rights to a Mission Impossible licence. With the film currently filming in Hungary and the US, Cruise stars as a master spy left to battle his way through a convuluted James Bond-style plot. Details on the film are few and far between at the mo, and Ocean haven't announced what plans they have for the game, but we do know it will be heading for the Megadrive, 32X and Saturn later this year. This magazine will now self-destruct...



RALLYING CRY

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- ARCADE

Firmly established as the kings of the coin-op, Sega are set to blow the minds of every arcade goer with their latest project Sega Rally Championship. Due to hit the streets around the March/ April time, the polygon generated power drive supersedes the already superb Daytona USA by shoving the player in front of the wheel of not one, but two cars — the authentic Celica GT-Four WRC and Lancia Delta Integrale '92 WRC dream machines. Add on top of this the three different stages of difficulty covering three different locations — Desert, Forest, and Mountain — and two views comfortably generated at 300, 000 polygons per second, and there you have it, the ultimate experience in arcade racing. Although nothing has been confirmed as yet, the usual rumours of a Saturn conversion are doing the rounds. More news on this as soon as we get it.





WHEELS ON FIRE

- NEW GAME
- BY TIME WARNER
- SATURN

It came as a bit of a surprise that Sega were licensing out the Saturn version of Virtua Racing to Time Warner, as their own AM2 team concentrates on Daytona. This is the very latest pic of their progress and the game is beginning to take a familiar Virtua Racing shape. Out for Saturn launch time in September.



▲ ***Starting to look more like the VR we know and love.***

CORE RACE AGAIN

- NEW GAME
- BY CORE
- 32X

Another Core game undergoing the 32X treatment is BC Racers. The updated version has been given a complete pitstop, with the programmers making use of the extra power to make it faster and smoother, and making the sprites bigger than before. Similarly, the two-player mode has been expanded upon, and Core are using a split-screen feature as opposed to the crap joint character option of before. As soon as it has passed its MOT we'll let you know what we think.





PEBBLE DASH

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

A challenger to Core's Scottish Virtual Open on the Saturn is driving in, courtesy of Sega themselves. The perennial Pebble Beach Golf Links is getting the 32BIT tartover, so Sega owners get the chance to see the game that nearly made the Philips CD-i. In any case, the seaside course gets some lovely digitised graphics and is presided over by 'fat blerk'. Well, we know he's a famous American golfer, but can't for the life of us remember which one.



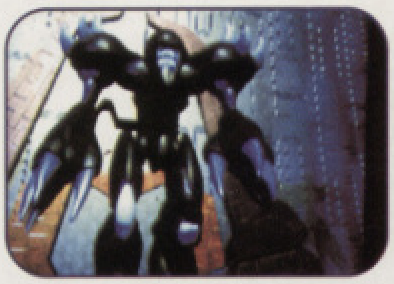
▼ ***Sadly, no pictures of fat blerk. Coding wortk on his girthness continues.***



STAR X, STAR X NIGHT

- NEW GAME
- BY CORE
- 32X

Here are the first pics of Core's 32X version of their Mega-CD blaster, Soulstar. Now masquerading under name Soulstar X, the 32X version features the same blasting action of the original, but uses rendered polygon graphics instead of the old bitmapped sprites. Core are aiming to sort out the gameplay faults of the original, too, and Soulstar X should be a faster, more addictive blast with more on screen and a better selection of weapons and power-ups. Having seen what Core can do with the Mega-CD we're looking forward to this, and a full preview is winging its way to you as we speak. Here it comes now. Oh no, that's our pizza. Sorry.





VIRTUA FIGHTERS FOR 32X!

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

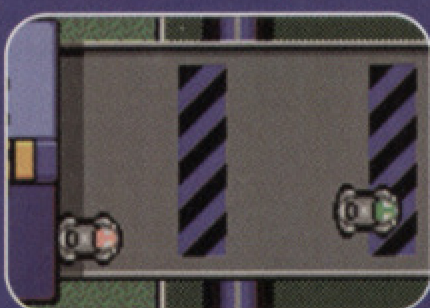
With their 32X/Megadrive amalgamation, the Neptune, announced, Sega have thought it an appropriate time to announce that Virtua Fighter will be appearing for the machine after all. After much umm-ing and ahh-ing, AM2 have confirmed work on a conversion has started, and the game should debut some time in November. Whilst it is obvious there will be differences between it and the Saturn version, we have been told that AM2 are still aiming to cram all the moves of the original into the plug-thru version. As such, we imagine the resultant conversion will lose out in the animation department, but time will tell and so will we. Very soon.



MICRO MICRO MACHINES

- NEW GAME
- BY CODEMASTERS
- GAMEGEAR

The best racer on the Megadrive is now Game Gear bound as Codemasters unveil the first shots of Micro Machines II for the humble handheld. Featuring most of the 16bit game's tracks and characters, Micro II also features the two-player mode of its cousin, with one player using the buttons, and the other the d-pad. The programmers are also hoping for a link-up four-player mode, but this has yet to be confirmed. It's out in April,





▲ *One of the corniest driving games ever.*

PICO-BOO!

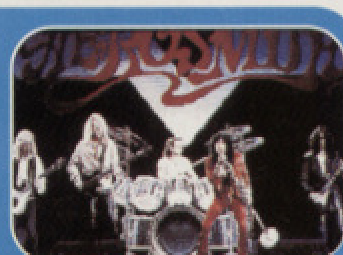
- NEW SYSTEM
- BY SEGA

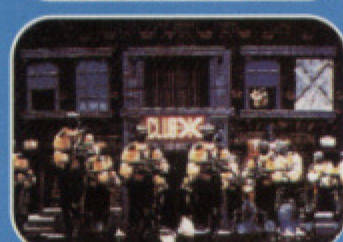
Not satisfied with the recent launch of the 32X and the imminent UK launch of the Saturn, Sega are preparing to pull the wraps off Pico, an all new system for younger console kids. Aimed at the 3-7 age group, the hardware has been designed for edutainment packages — painting, spelling, counting, music-making — featuring an array of Sega home-grown stars and guest appearances from Disney veterans alike. The carts come in the form of 'Storyware' — a book/cart — that changes the skill at the turn of a page on the upright part of the machine. More powerful than a Megadrive, the system has already made its mark in both Japan and the States and is expected to land here in April.

LOVE IN AN ELEVATOR

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE/32X

"Living it up as I'm going down" shrieks Steven Tyler. That's the sort of smut we can do without, but more of that bad-ass, unhealthy influence, god-damm rawk music is coming your way with Revolution X. Based on the same arcade game, it's a 3D shoot 'em up with you taking on hordes of music-hating fun spoilers by throwing CDs at them, and 'chillin out' to the music of Aerosmith. Hmmm, out in the Autumn and a free Brian May wig with every copy we're told. (Editorial lie).





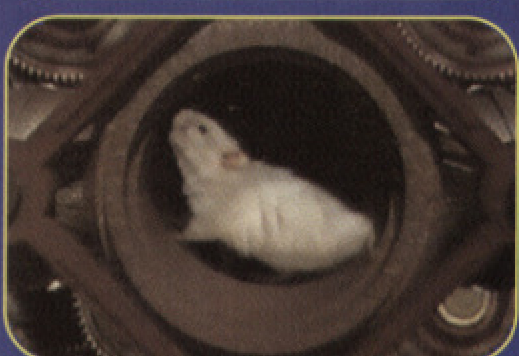
TRIPPY

- COMPETITION
- BY BMG
- VHS VIDEO

Gate to the Mind's Eye is a new video of state-of-the-art graphics demos from 80 of the world's top computer animation studios. Strung together into 50 minutes of footage, the project is backed with a specially commissioned soundtrack by Thomas Dolby. Mr Dolby was a minor popstar in the early Eighties who once cavorted across a climbing frame with a cardboard box on his head. But he's all right now, and some of his tracks are quite good — handbag house, ambient, etc. Sega are even in there with clips from Megalopolice, an arcade simulator ride. We suggest you check it out.







To win a copy, courtesy of BMG Video, answer this simple hi-fi question:

What are Dolby Laborotoires famous for?
A) Stereos B)Mad scientists
C) Headache remedies

We'll pick ten correct entries for vids. Send to 'Shut that gate' compo at the normal MEAN MACHINES address.

US GOLD ROCK (MAN)

- NEW GAME
- BY US GOLD
- GAME GEAR

Fresh from his escapades on the Megadrive, US Gold are set to unveil a Rockman game for the Game Gear. An amalgamation of the existing Game Boy and NES carts, US Gold are drawing ideas from past games in the series to create a 'best of' cart. Once again, Rockman goes to battle against the usual metal, wood and mud baddies as he picks his way through the heavily-defended flick-screen levels. We reckon the Game Gear will be the perfect home for Rockman, and will be bringing you a full preview as soon as there's something to see.

HORROR STRIKES

- NEW GAME
- BY TAITO
- SATURN

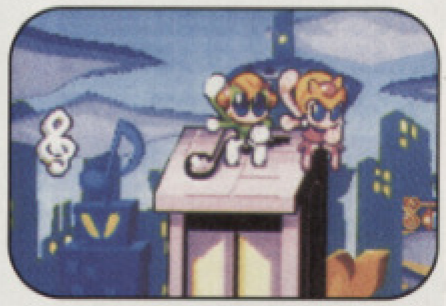
We were lightly chilled by the news of a version of Night Strikers for the Saturn. Still in our memory is the horrific Mega-CD version, an abominable and unconvincing 3D flight through some blocky landscapes. God only knows what this conversion will throw up, but chances are it will never make it to the UK.



RHYTHM KING

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

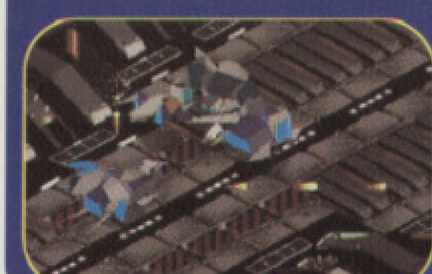
Whigfield fans (and Leftfield fans, for that matter) may be thrilled to behold Tempo, a musical little platform game for the 32X. A colourful roustabout aimed mainly at kids, players control two be-headphoned little creatures as they tour the Sonic city, looking for opportunities to dance to disco and kick the baddies. It looks like a laugh, but Sega UK are doubtful of the timing of an official release.



MOTHER'S PRIDE

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- 32X

Hot on the heels of the first batch of 32X titles, Sega are announcing the launch of the second wave. Among the frontrunners of the new carts is Mother Base, an isometric Zaxxon style space shoot 'em up with a twist. The twist being that you can dock with other ships in your armada to exploit their special abilities. Not expected until June, MEAN MACHINES will keep you posted on all the latest developments.



CD RASH

- NEW GAME
- BY EA
- MEGA-CD

With Road Rash III burning up on a Megadrive near you, EA are planning to bundle all the best bits of the series together for their forthcoming Mega-CD version. Road Rash CD, for it is he, uses the larger sprites of the most recent version, but set against levels lifted from the trilogy. A larger variety of weapons are available, too, with spray cans and long poles added to the inventory, and the whole caboodle is topped off by the specially filmed intro used for the 3DO game. Scheduled for an April release, a review is forthcoming.



BEAN THERE, DONE IT

- NEW GAME
- BY SUNSOFT
- SATURN

One of the best Tetris clones for years, the scarily-named Hebereke Popoon, is being brought to the Saturn by Sunsoft. It's similar in style to Puyo Puyo (Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine) with coloured blobs falling from the ceiling and magical spells being used to foil opponents in the head-to-head game. Graphically smart, and odds on for a UK Saturn launch.





▲ ***Hebereke! Hebereke! Hebereke! The crowd go wild.***

SATURN ROUND UP

- NEW GAME
- BY VARIOUS
- SATURN

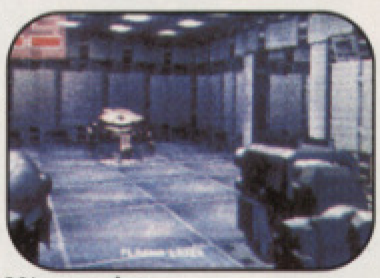
Various snippets to keep you up to date with the Japanese scene.

Pictures confirm that Raiden 2, the massively successful coin-op from Seibu is Saturn bound. This really is the first pure blaster for the machine.

Rampo is an adventure detection game in the mould of Wanchai Connection. It uses a lot of footage of Japanese actors, and screeds of character text, making it unlikely to see a European release.



Looking much more accessible is an unnamed Doom clone, with some brilliant texture-mapped visuals, despite only being 40% complete.



Finally DD is another adventure, but one created from textured polygons in much the same way as Shadow of Atlantis and Myst. Puzzles are solved through visual clues and simple joypad commands. It's looking very nice.

FLIPPERING 'ECK

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGA-CD

Following the recent release of Ecco: Tides of Time, Ecco is up for more flipper frolics time on the graphically and level enhanced Mega-CD version. Sporting an impressive Silicon Graphics generated intro sequence summarising Ecco's previous confrontation with the Vortex Queen, the game also boasts extra levels and CD quality sound. What's more rumour central has reported in that the entire first Ecco game is included on the disc as a bonus hidden game. Not bad eh?





YOU DON'T SAY

I say, ol' bean, have you heard the latest?

Let's start with a tasty licence. The canny beggars at Acclaim have signed up Zyrinx (the chaps behind Red Zone and Sub-Terrania) to produce their forthcoming Batman Forever game. The game is said to be looking really good and is running parallel to the movie's development, with Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey all shooting special scenes for inclusion. Batman Forever opts for the Doom look with the player scouring tunnels in search of the bad guys, but as we're in Zyrinx territory here, you can be assured that the Acclaim game will make Doom look as dated as those trousers Bianca wears on Eastenders.

We hear that the battle to release Earthworm Jim II is becoming rather hot. After the initial rumours that Virgin would inherit the as-yet-unseen sequel, those ever-present gossiping birdies have told us that the race to sign the heroic worm has spread to Acclaim and Interplay. Who will win? The company with the biggest cheque book probably...

Over at Codemasters HQ, their programming chaps are busying themselves putting together a sequel to Pete Sampras Tennis. Whilst the final name has yet to be decided, Sampras II's graphics will be better and even more shots will be available. Oh yeah, have we mentioned that Virgin are releasing a game based on Disney's classic cartoon, Pinnochio? Well, we have now.

Hmmm, it doesn't look as if we're going to see a review copy of Acclaim's Itchy And Scratchy. It's a bit of a let-down, you see, and Acclaim are afraid it'll get a bit of a drubbing. A pity, as the licence had real potential.

Finally, Acclaim are said to be deep in the bidding for the home versions of Mortal Kombat III. Set in the aftermath of Shao Kahn's reign, Sonya and Kano return, and all the fighters have been massively augmented. Larger sprites are also said to be the order of the day with more colours and detail than before. As such, does this mean a Megadrive version is out of the question? We'll see...

'Til next month,
Pip pip...

PSYCHO ART

Two months ago, as you'll recall, we asked you to design us a pinball table inspired by MEAN MACHINES and Codemasters' Psycho Pinball. Well, it's time to put on our best Blue Peter clichés and say 'the response was overwhelming'. We had entries of all shapes and sizes. Some were brilliant, some were crap. But we all sat down and argued out our choices for the winners (using some unlucky ones to mop up a beer spillage at the time). And here are the winners for you to salute, and some losers for you to deride. Just to remind you of the prizes:

ULTIMATE WINNER:Sega 32X, Pyscho Pinball MA1 jacket (limited edition),Psycho Pinball top, Psycho Nation album, Micro Machines 2 despatch bag, Codies pin badge.

AGE CATEGORY WINNERS: Sega 32X, Psycho Pinball top, Psycho Nation album, Micro Machines 2 despatch bag, Codies pin badge.

RUNNERS UP:Psycho Pinball top.

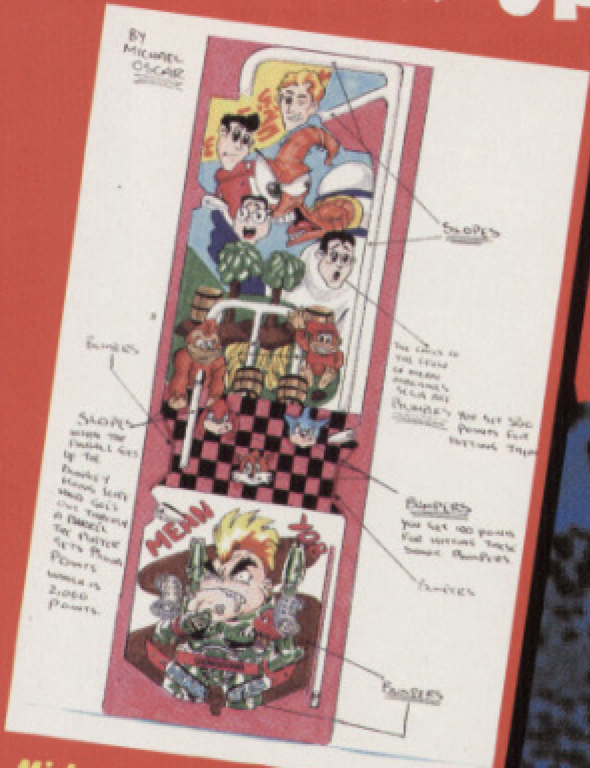
AGED 16 AND OVER

ULTIMATE WINNER



Philip Brickland, Derby. We are impressed.

RUNNER-UP



Michael Oscar, London. What's with DK?

RUNNER-UP



Stewart McCrone, St. Arvans, Wales. Looks fab.

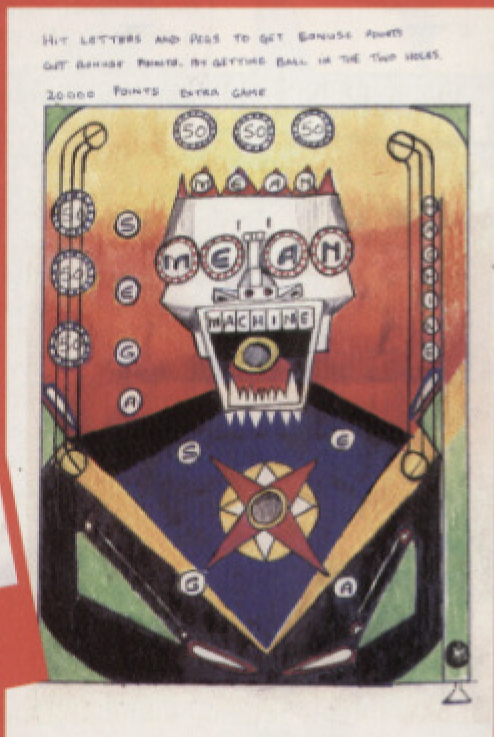
AGED 10 AND UNDER

RUNNER-UP



David Easton, Sennybridge. Good all round.

WINNER



Steven Penfold, Wallingford. We liked the colouring.

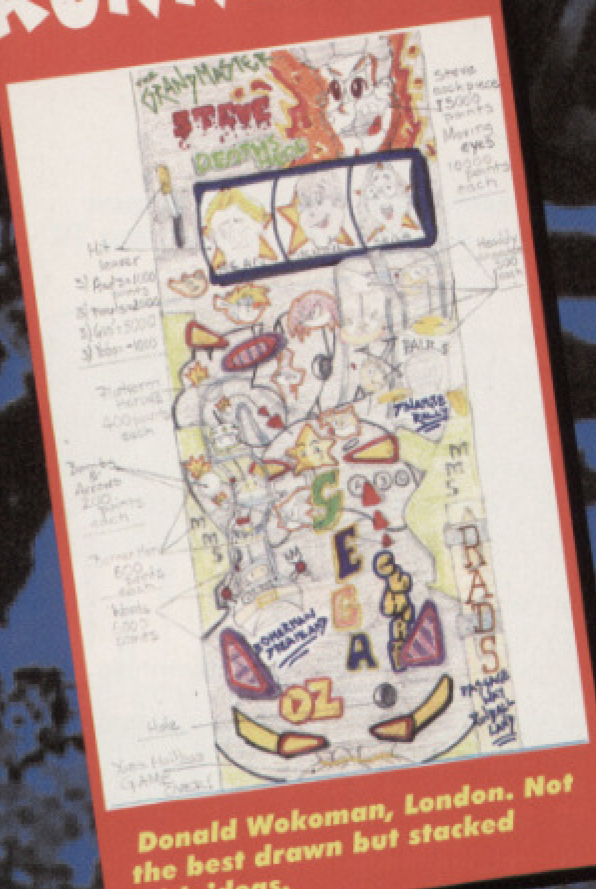
RUNNER-UP



John Thorne, Warrington. Loads of features.

AGED 11 TO 15

RUNNER-UP



Donald Wokoman, London. Not the best drawn but stacked with ideas.

WINNER



Darren Buckley, Birmingham. Great likenesses of the crew.

RUNNER-UP



Max Ottignon, Laverton. Check out the queue — very smart.

GET YOUR HANDS OFF MY CHOPPER NOW!

WIN A HELICOPTER AND TIME WARNER'S FAB RED ZONE!

TIME WARNER INTERACTIVE

Sometimes I hate being a comps minion. Like right now. Usually putting together these scummy pages, with their dork questions and flaccid intros is quite relaxing while supping a cup o' char and selecting the orange Revels from the packet on my desk. And who cares about the 'employees-of-Lord-Emap-may-not-enter' spiel when normally the prize is a paper baseball cap and a clear plastic rainmate with 'Nobbysoft Presents' stamped on the side.

But sometimes you get a ruddy marvellous compo with a bloody brilliant prize and I WANT TO ENTER! (but I can't).

And this is one serious compo. The commandoes and commandoennes at Time Warner Interactive are giving you lot the chance to win a Concept 30 SR-T powered remote control helicopter worth £700! That's, like, the annual defence budget of Luxembourg. This is a seriously high-powered piece of kit, designed by a helicopter aerobatics world champion and engineered to the highest standards.

The lucky winner of this fantastic prize will also walk off with a copy of Time Warner's Red Zone, also engineered to the highest standards, and exacting a huge 94% score when reviewed in MEAN MACHINES. Six runners-up will be helicopter-less, but endowed with copies of Red Zones and a massive game poster. Can you really afford not to answer the simple questions given below? Spare a thought for those who are not allowed...



FIRST PRIZE:
- CONCEPT 30 RS-T HELICOPTER
- COPY OF RED ZONE
- RED ZONE POSTER

SECOND PRIZE:

SIX RUNNERS UP:
- COPY OF RED ZONE
- RED ZONE POSTER

QUESTIONS

1. Which 'zone' group had a Xmas hit with 'Love me for a reason'

A. Girlzone
B. Boyzone
C. Granzone

2. Which 'zone' is a protective atmospheric layer AND a Sunday morning TV show?

A. O-Zone
B. X-Zone
C. J-Zone

3. What previous Megadrive game did Redzone's programmers Zyrinx produce?

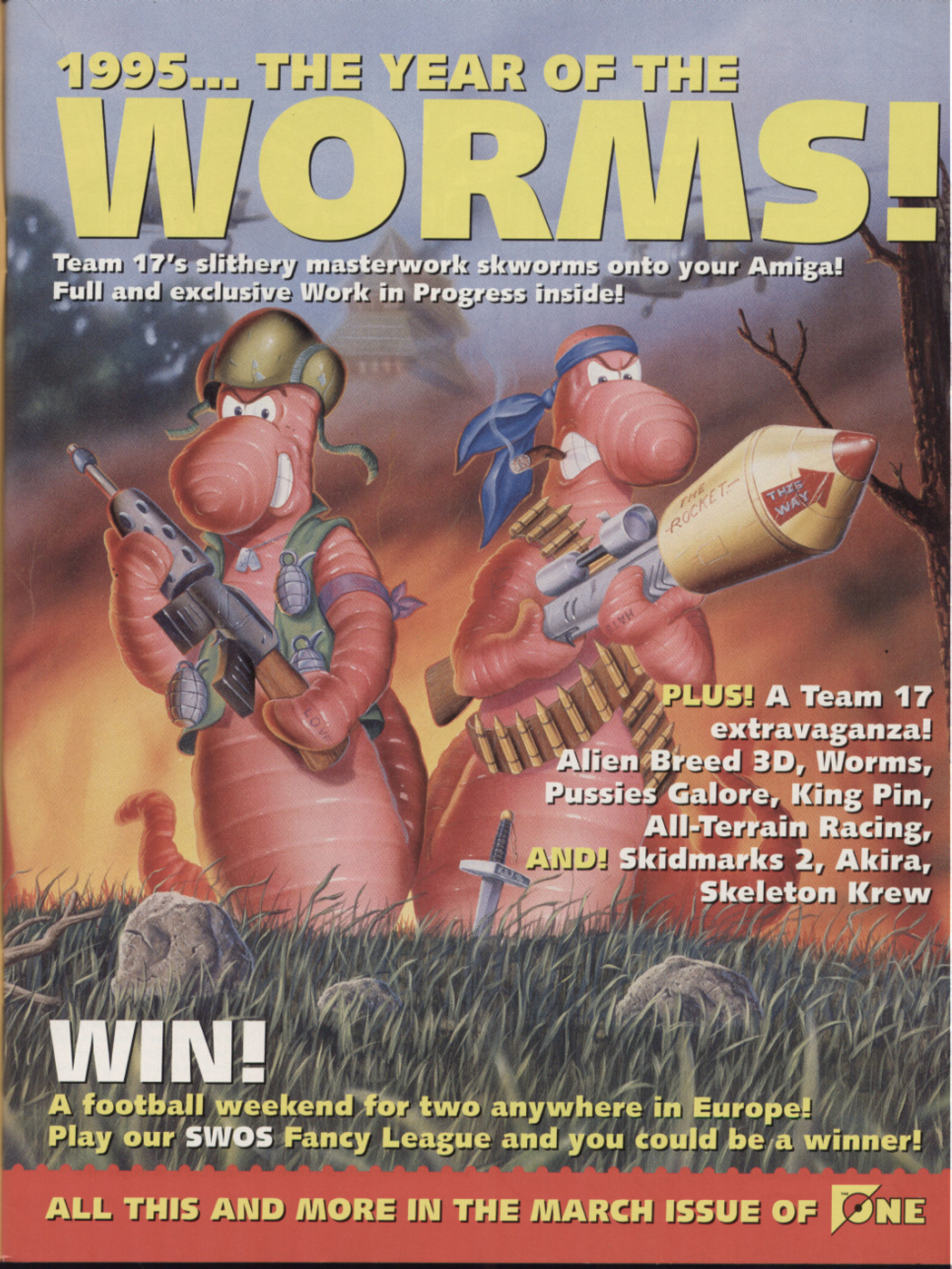
A. Subterreania
B. Nobby's platform scumville
C. Captain Cholesterol's fry-up adventure.

Stick your answers on a postcard and send it to MY CHOPPER'S IN THE RED ZONE COMPO, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Make sure it gets here before 1st April.

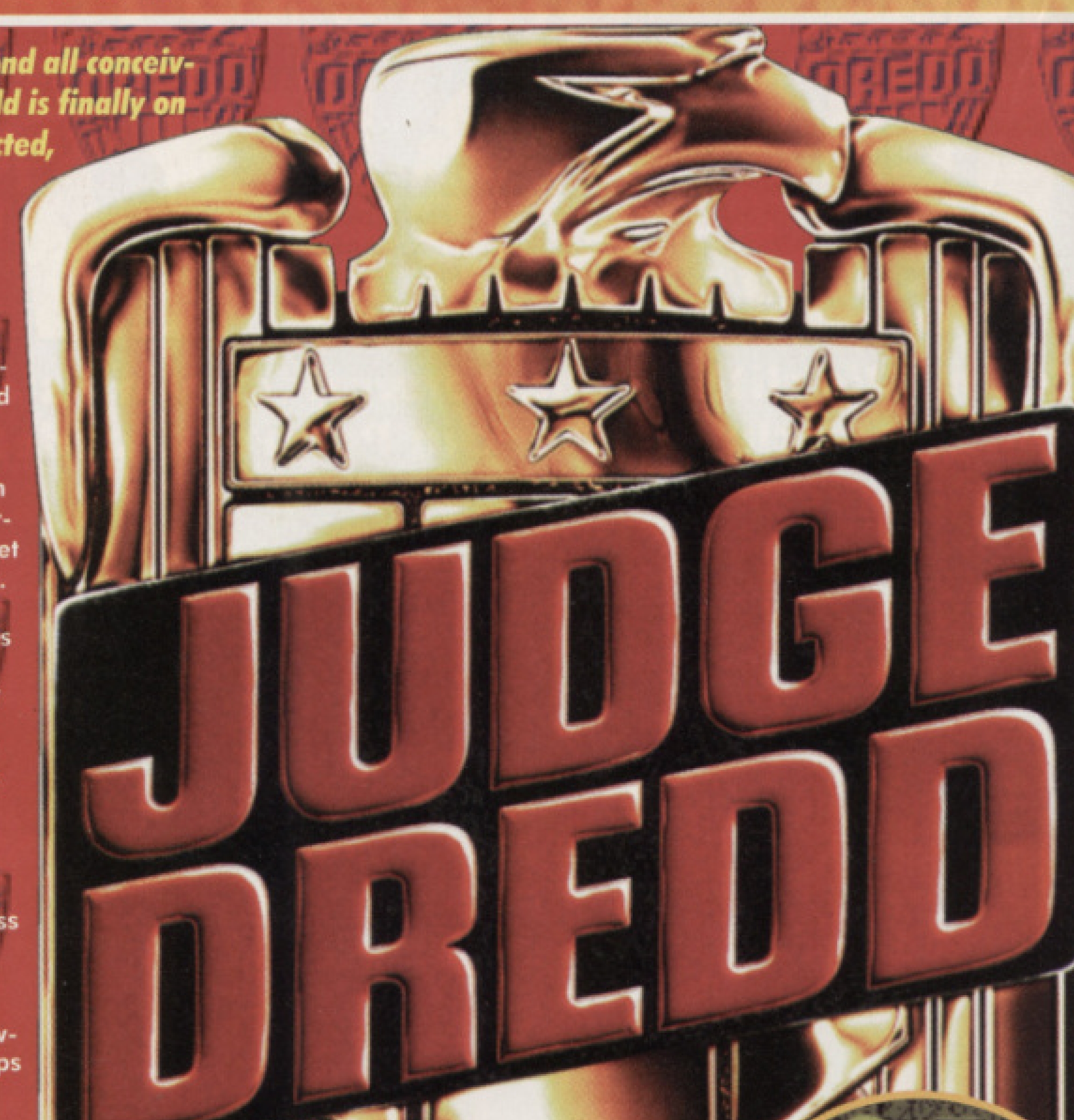
COMPETITION RULES

Normal rules of entry for EMAP IMAGES competitions apply. In the event of a tie a winner will be selected from correct entries. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entrants under 16 are advised to seek parental consent before entering the competition. Winners will be notified and competition results printed in a later issue of MEAN MACHINES.

MEAN MACHINES SEGA and EMAP IMAGES accept no responsibility or liability for any conditions arising from the use or operation of the Concept 30 RS-T. The prize is awarded in the understanding it be used in accordance with instructions and procedures for safe use. Proper training and guidance should be sought before use.


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THE ROCKET
THIS WAY
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AND! Skidmarks 2, Akira, Skeleton Krew
WIN!
A football weekend for two anywhere in Europe!
Play our SWOS Fancy League and you could be a winner!
ALL THIS AND MORE IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF THE ONE

In a world where crime has escalated beyond all conceivable boundaries, HE is the law! Judge Dredd is finally on his way to our movie screens and, as expected, heading for the Megadrive too. Steve comes along quietly...



The job of converting Stallone's incarnation of Dredd to the home machines has fallen to licence veterans, Probe, who have recently completed the coding duties on The Pagemaster and Stargate. Work began on the conversion just over a year ago, shortly after Acclaim snapped the licence up, with fourteen people working on converting the game to virtually every home format imaginable — with a Game Gear version set to follow the July release of this Megadrive cart.

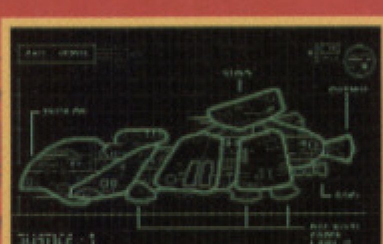
The Megadrive game is set to weigh in at a hefty 16MEG, and is made up of fourteen stages each of which is split into a further three sub-stages. Pulling on the heavy boots of Mega City One's number one Judge, the player is left to blast a trail through seven stages based on the events in the film, whilst the final seven feature appearances from characters in Dredd comic book mythology.

As with Stargate and Alien 3, Probe have opted for a platform scenario with the player making Dredd run, crawl, climb and jump across a series of eight-way-scrolling stages. Armed with his trusty Lawgiver gun and whatever weaponry he can find, the game is split into a series of smaller missions with the player following orders to rescue hostages, kill or arrest perps or destroying weapon caches. Initially, the first seven levels lead the player to a confrontation with Rico, Dredd's adversary in the film, but beyond this lie comic anti-heroes such as Judge Death and his Dark Judges and Mean Machine Angel. But as a Judge, Dredd has the jurisdiction to act as Judge, Jury AND Executioner!



The game representations of artwork are looking superb.







The sprites of Mega City 1 baddies.

PROJECT
JUDGE DREDD

PUBLISHER
ACCLAIM

INITIATED
FEBRUARY '94

RELEASE
JULY '95

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE

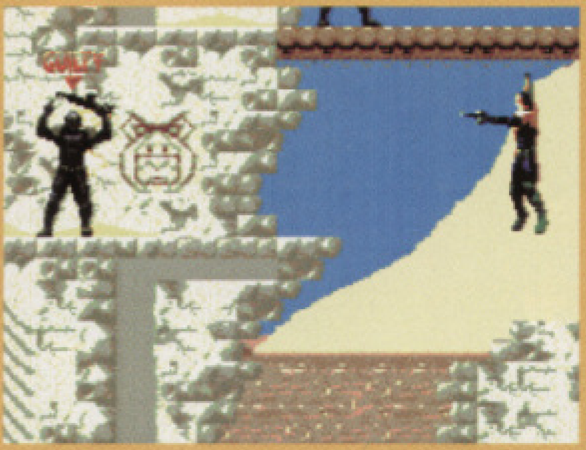
DEVELOPERS
PROBE SOFTWARE

THE COMICS

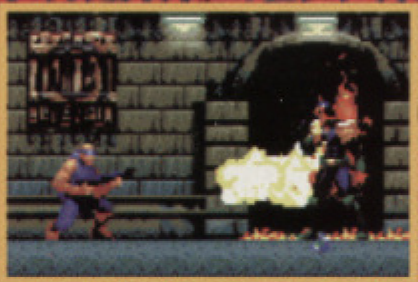
Judge Joe Dredd was created by comic veterans John Wagner and artist, Carlos Ezquerra, in 1977 for inclusion in the second issue of the fledgling 'adult' comic 2000AD. Running alongside the strip adventures of Mach 3 and Slaine, Dredd's brand of straight-down-the-line law and order won him instant acclaim and saw his strip adventures become the focal point of the comic. Dredd came from an idea Wagner had for a man who would be judge, jury and executioner rolled into one person. His vision saw a man trained from birth to uphold the law to the word and who was utterly incorruptible. From Wagner's initial script it fell to Ezquerra to take the ideas and flesh them out , designing the look and outfits Dredd and the Mega City One Judges have

FREEZE, PERP!

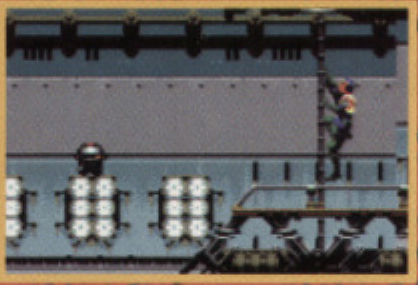
A Mega City One Judge is armed with the most advanced gun available. The Lawgiver is a weapon which responds to the genetic code of the Judge it belongs to, and is capable of firing one of a number of special rounds — and detonating instantly should the weapon fall into enemy hands. Both the film and game remain true to this, with Dredd's Megadrive arsenal including rebounding bullets, double-whammy spread fire, and grenades, all of which are easily interchanged. Similarly, our hero's task is also made easier by collecting goodies dropped by arrested felons, including extra energy and less orthodox weaponry.



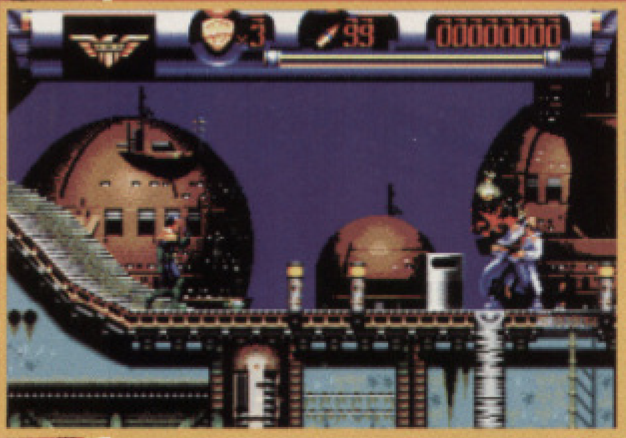








▲ An early interior scene from the game.



▲ The distinctive archetictures of Mega City.



worn ever since.

In his seventeen years in active magazine service, life has not been kind to Dredd. He has seen countless Judges die as the city's crime wave has escalated, watched millions die at the hands of Judge Death and his unearthly Dark Judges, and found out that he is in fact a clone created by the city's scientific department. Similarly, it was during this particular investigation that he also found out he had a clone brother, Rico, who he was forced to kill. He has also been banished to the wastelands around the city — the infamous Cursed Earth — been sentenced to the prison world Titan, and been hideously disfigured and undergone more plastic surgery than Michael Jackson (hey, Judge Wacko — bags the copyright!).

During these turbulent times, though, one thing has remained constant: Dredd's respect for the law. He is the fiercest of all the Judges, and his word is law...



▲ Dredd contempates life without a crossbar.



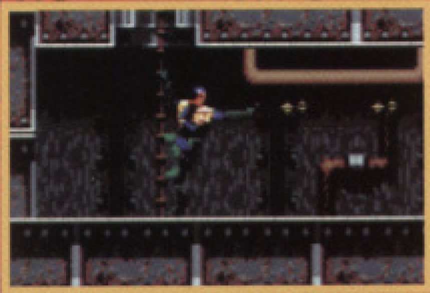
▲ Look at the muck in there.





▲ Danger from a can of Silvkrin and a box of matches.





SOUNDING OFF

The in-game sound has yet to be completed, but the programmers were initially hoping to scatter a few movie samples to spice up the action. Sadly, their plans for digitised 'Freeze, Perps' had to be forgotten as the game's sprawling levels started to eat at the available memory, but Probe are still planning some original incidental music and a series of grunts and blast effects to complement the action.

THE FILM

After years of expectant waiting, 1993 finally saw the Judge Dredd movie given the green light. Written by Steven De Souza (the guy behind the new Street Fighter movie), and starring Sylvester Stallone as Mega City One's greatest lawman, Judge Dredd began shooting in March this year with Shepperton Studios playing host to the impossibly high cityscape of Mega City One, with additional sets at Pinewood home to the 'Council Of Five' and some of the grimier tower blocks. Rumours regarding the film have been rife since the idea was proposed over ten years ago, but we can reveal that the film remains fairly true to the comics, with the exception of Stallone removing his helme midway through the film (st ning comic owners who insi Joe would never do such a

MOTORBIKIN'



Just as The Lone Ranger had Silver, his trusty steed, Dredd's transport comes in the form of his Lawmaster bike. With built-in armaments and remote control capabilities, these massive bikes are a Judge's best friend. In fact, so impressed were Probe with their capabilities, that they added a few more! Midway through the game, Dredd's bike takes to the air to pick off a group of perps terrorising Mega City One's skyline.



DREDD FACTS

During his seventeen year evolutionary process, readers of Dredd's adventures have gradually learned more and more about Mega City One's finest. However, Dredd is one small part of an entire world created by 2000AD's creative teams, and the Judge mythos covers every aspect of the 22nd Century they have created.

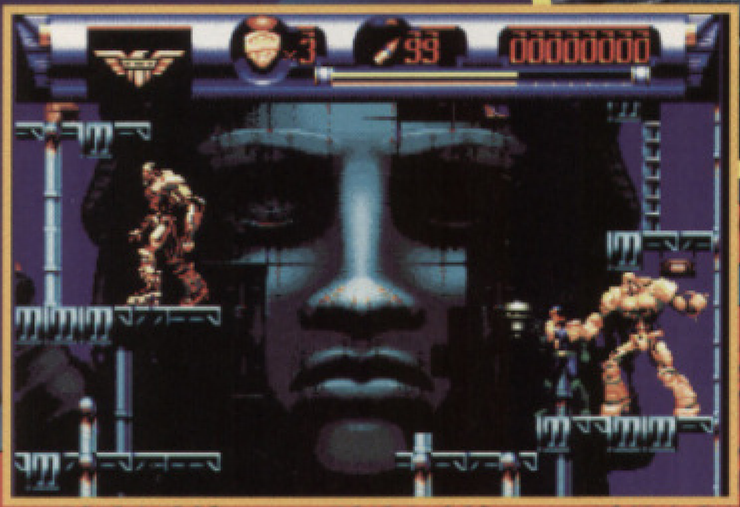
* Following the Atomic Wars which left the Earth a scarred and barely inhabitable husk, most of the world's population are housed in huge 'Mega Cities.' Each of these cities are governed by a Judge team of some sort, where the said law enforcers have the power to imprison, detain or execute on the spot. Such cities include Mega City One (where New York used to stand), New Jerusalem, and Brit-Cit (the UK, no less). East-Meg One was the largest city until Dredd ordered its destruction via nuclear warfare. Mega City One is now the largest.

* The Mega Cities are the only safe havens, as the wastelands surrounding them are sodden with radiation and rife with Muties and assorted lawbreakers — most famous of which is the Cursed Earth which surrounds Mega City One. When respected Judges end their careers they are given the chance to opt for 'The Long Walk' where they are given full military honours and banished to the outside.

* The long arm of the law stretches across the world. Cal-Hab (which used to be Scotland but is now a dumping ground for radioactive waste) boasts kilt-wearing Judges, whilst the

thing), and the sad omission of Psi-Division's Cassandra Anderson. Still, up on the big screen will be Dredd, Hershey, McGruder, the Cursed Earth, and a superb recreation of Mega-City One, and that should keep fans of his comic exploits more than happy





Thrilling action with the backdrop of the symbol of liberty and justice.





Japanese Hondo City Judges wear uniforms based on Samurai armour. As mankind once again strives to populate other planets, their progress is overseen by Circuit Judges, whilst alien attacks fall under the jurisdiction of the Space Judge Militia.

THE FILM

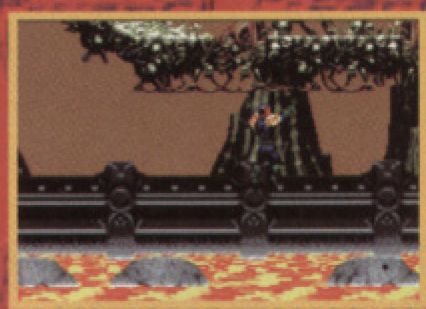




The film's plot is, of course, shrouded in secrecy, but we can reveal that Dredd's clone brother, Rico, plays a major part in the proceedings and his involvement frames Dredd and nearly splits the 'Council Of Five', leaving Mega-City One open to his plans for domination. With Hershey as his one ally, Dredd's attempts to get even make for an explosive finale...

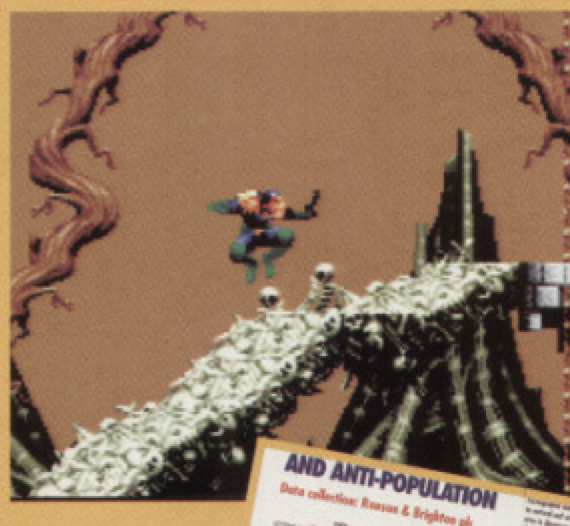






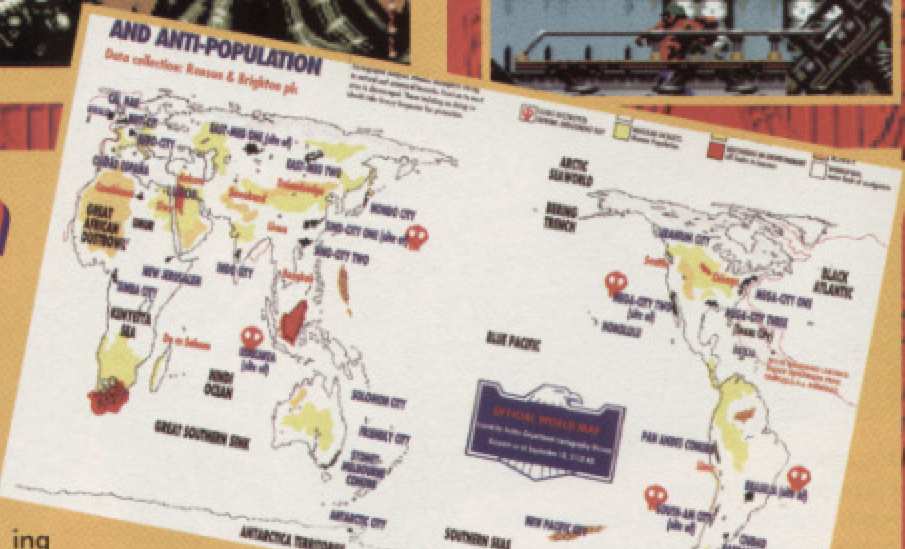


DEATH BECOMES YOU



Dredd's journey to battle Rico and beyond takes place in a series of backdrops instantly recognisable to Dredd fans. Starting his crime-busting in Mega-City One (with the now-decrepit Statue Of Liberty acting as a backdrop), Dredd then proceeds into the sewers beneath the city, into the Cursed Earth where Muties galore lurk, and even into the barren domain of the Dark Judges. Each of these stages is made up of three stages, with Dredd given a preliminary task which grants him access to the next world, and with a boss creature awaiting at the end of the third. At the time of writing, though, the bosses hadn't been implemented, but are likely to include Judge Death and Warbots (huge psychotic droids).

DREDD FACTS



* Mega City One stretches from Maine in the north down to South Carolina, and is next to the heavily-polluted Black Atlantic. 50% of the inhabitants are housed within the towering citi-blocs which can hold 60,000 people. Alternatively, a family can live in a vehicle on the Skedway which never stops moving. Unemployment is high at 87% as the city is virtually automated, so time-wasting is a major part of every citizen's day.

* Crimes range from the obvious murder and mugging charges down to 'incitement to mug' should the Judges deem a victim an easy target. Crimes are met with a period in the Iso-Cubes, small cells where people are held for a predetermined amount of time. However, resisting arrest is punishable by death. Similarly, if a known felon is critically wounded when brought in, they are kept in cryogenic stasis until they are well enough to serve their time!

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Prepare yourself for the chain gang with Sega's Chaotix. Two characters, one player and the potential for Summer blockbuster status. Gus goes to Schloss Hedgehog for details.



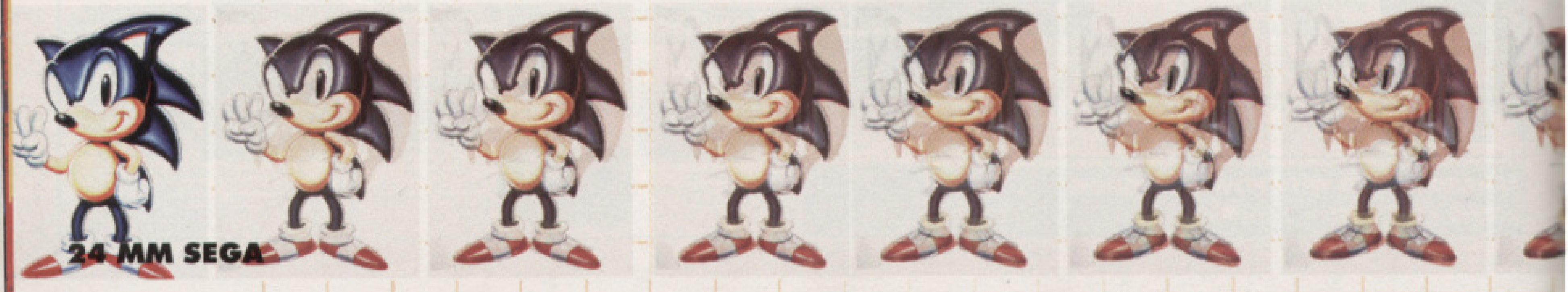
When the idea of the 32X hardware was first mooted people automatically assumed a Sonic game would be there to complement it. Some even suggested the Sonic arcade game. But the 32X arrived without even a sniff of hedgehog. That shouldn't be seen as surprising, as the original Sonic appeared some two years after the Megadrive's launch.

Now Sega are presenting the early versions of Chaotix, which twists expectations even further. It's the first 'Sonic' game not to feature Sonic. The graphics, the styling and in many ways the gameplay are unmistakeably Sonic, but Sega's brightest star has been omitted to make way for a new generation of game characters — the heroes of Chaotix.

Leading the cast, and lending some Sonic continuity is Knuckles, co-star of both Sonic 3 and the Sonic and Knuckles plug-thru. Now firmly on the side of the goodies, he takes an assortment of other speed-crazed animals through an island setting whose styling makes Chaotix the most bizarre and outrageous flight of fancy yet. Stunning new programming techniques, effects and new gameplay are evidence of programmers beginning to get to grips with the 32X hardware in a way that some earlier, and disappointing releases didn't suggest.

The impressive stills here belie the fact that Chaotix is entering its crucial beta-testing phase, where the meat of the gameplay comes under close scrutiny. Sonic adventures have always provided the best technical achievement with a high-standard of gameplay, and it is this that will occupy the Sega team from now until the scheduled release in June or July. Until then, look at what's an offer, and maybe see if it changes your mind on the 32X after all.



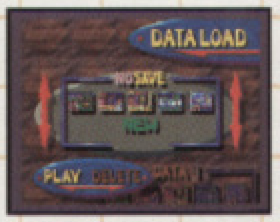


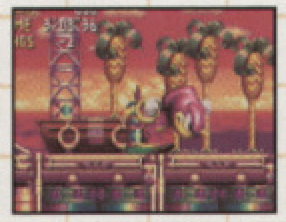
CHAOTIX

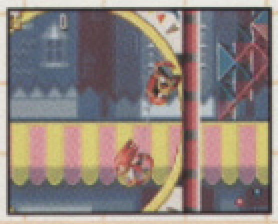
















PROJECT
CHAOTIX

PUBLISHER
SEGA

INITIATED
MARCH '94

RELEASE
JUNE '95

FORMAT
32X

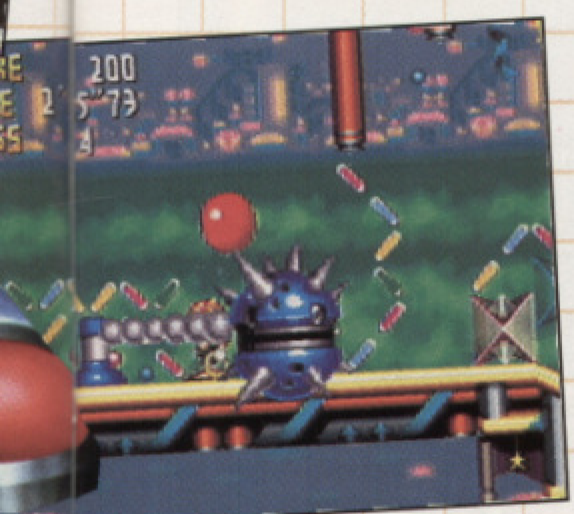
DEVELOPERS
SEGA

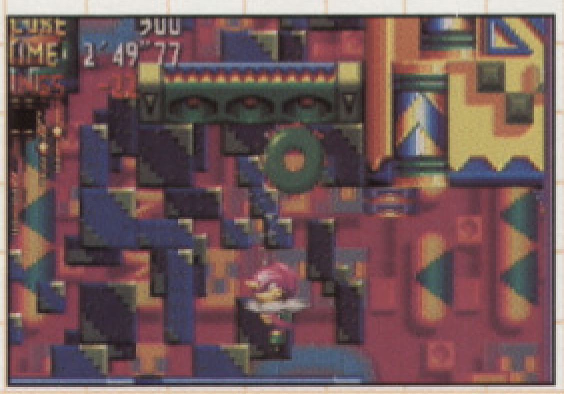
JOINED AT THE HIP

Part of the reason Sega held back on announcing Chaotix for so long was their hesitancy over the bold innovations of its gameplay. It features a dual-character control method, even in single player mode. Making this accessible and rewarding to play has been one of the main challenges of the project.

Chaotix restyles platforming by joining two of the game characters together by a spangly chain. Each takes a separate role, one being the 'lead' character, the other playing as the 'anchor' character. The lead is under direct control in the single player game. Controlling them from the joypad is much the same as any other platform game. However the game's dynamics are affected by the connected anchor character. The gravity and inertia of this second sprite affects the first. You can be slowed down or dragged along by them depending on the layout.

The second character is not just there to create control problems. Along with it comes a whole new set of special moves. Unlike the simple spin attack of previous games pulling these off requires practice and patience. The result gives the game a completely new feel, and a great deal more depth.





LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

This is the first in the series to feature a real dual-player cooperative mode. After the 'cod' two-player mode of Sonic and Tails, and the partial split-screen adventures of Sonic 3, Chaotix gives each player control of one of the two linked characters. As you'd expect, early play using this system is pandemonium as the pair have really got to agree to make any progress. The two-player game is one of the later functions to receive attention, but it looks like creating whole new demands of gaming etiquette — and potential for bust-ups!





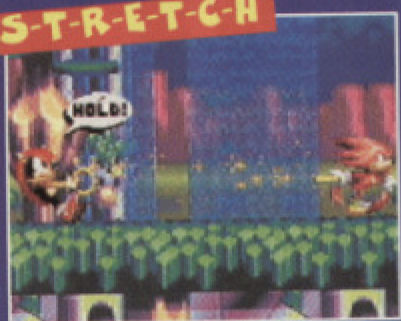




DOES AS I DO

The extensive demo mode found in the game probably stems from concerns about the ambitious control method. Rather than throw you in at the deep end, players who start an unsaved game are taken through some rudimentary actions. In a series of simple corridors, the basic moves are shown with written instructions, joypad diagrams and then opportunities to practice. Seasoned players will naturally bypass this and the first enemy-free level, but it's an impressive sign of consideration for the less advantaged.

S-T-R-E-T-C-H



By anchoring the second character, the pair can set up a tension in the link by pulling it apart like a rubber band.

BOING!



When released, the pair can use the tension in one of two ways. Simply letting go gives the leader a speed boost to drag the anchor with him. A more complex move sets up a two way catapult that provides the ultimate leap forward.

YOU'RE CHUCKED



Baddie busting is made simpler by picking up your mate and throwing him at the opposition.



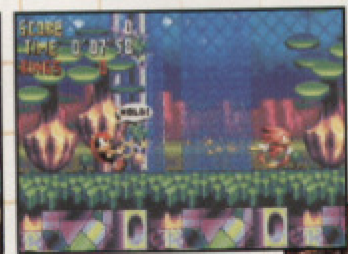


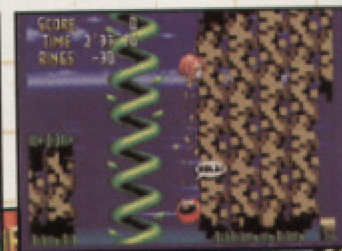
▲ Whiir, click, random stage select.

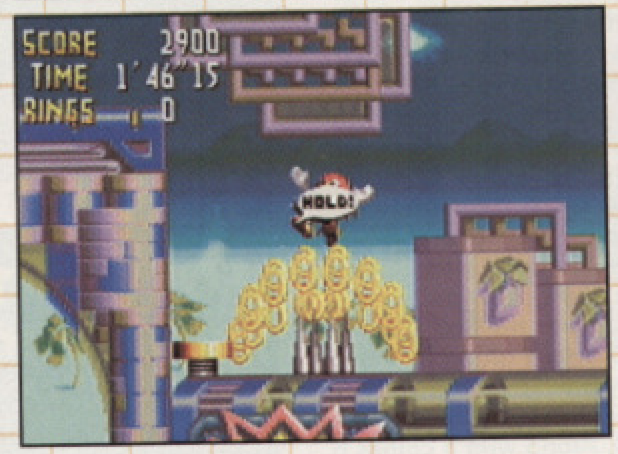


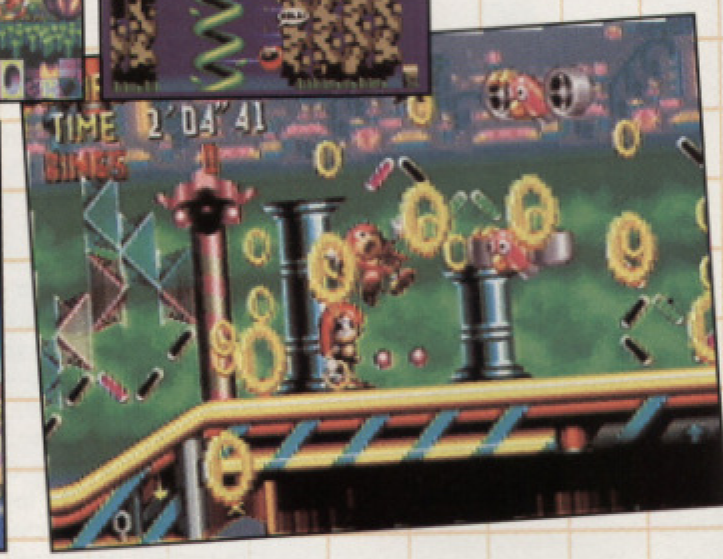
▲ Take me, big boy.













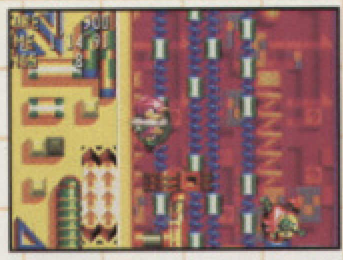


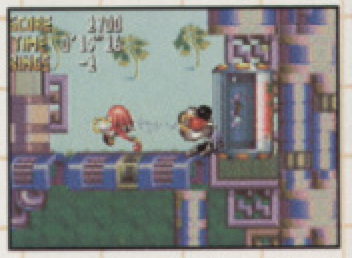


▲ Like, 'delic man, psychedelicious.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Incorporating special stages into Sonic games has become a tradition, and Chaotix is destined to impress with its bonus levels. Three are planned, with two accessible at the moment. Both would be impossible to program on the Megadrive. The first is a bottomless pit with psychedelic colour cycling sides. The player character is in free-fall, bouncing off bonus blocks which zoom out of the screen in extremely fast 3-D. The simple aim is to avoid the exits and collect as much loot as possible. Game two is a bit more mysterious. The character runs through a series of hexagonal polygon-generated tunnels and plains, grabbing rings and avoiding mines. It's like a souped-up version of the tunnel sub-game in Sonic 2 remixed with the ball collecting subgame of Sonic 3. The visuals are looking stunning for this section, as you can jump onto any one of the tunnel's six faces, flipping the screen in all manner of confusing contortions. This level has come on a lot from the previous version of Chaotix we saw, where the scrolling layouts were jerky and confusing. Just how this fab zone is entered remains to be seen.





▲ ***You farted in there, didn't you?***

HRT-HEDGEHOG REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Sonic's taking a vacation, but the supporting cast is interesting enough to make up for it. Who knows who might join this crew before the game is completed? As each game is played with two, the permutations for play are substantial

KNUCKLES



Best known of the bunch, having featured in two previous games. Knuckles retains his abilities to fly and climb. Red and robust.

ESPIO



On the title screen Espio gets second billing. A cham eleonn, He can't climb walls, but has a great spinning top move.

VECTOR



Crocodile or alligator? We're not sure. However, Vector does appear to be the quickest and has some snappy control response.

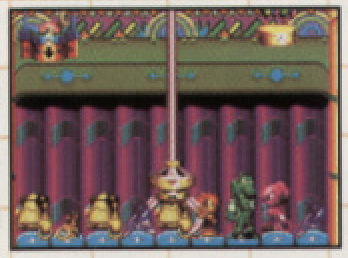
CHARMY BEE



This cute little fella will probably become a massive favourite. Flies well and is light to carry as an anchor character.

ANTEROOM

Chaotix features a between level sequence that brings an element of chance to level progression. After successfully completing a stage, the character stops a moving panel of lights to discover the next stage. Skill and timing allows you to pick the area you want — giving you the choice of levels found in games like Gunstar Heroes. On the way to the level select is the combi-snatcher. This optional diversion lets you pick a new partner, should you be unhappy with your current chain mate. However, the possibility of picking a sluggish badnik partner by accident is a consideration.

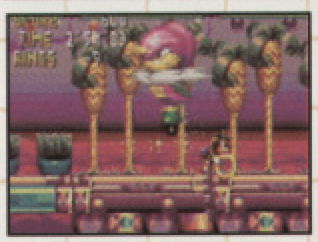




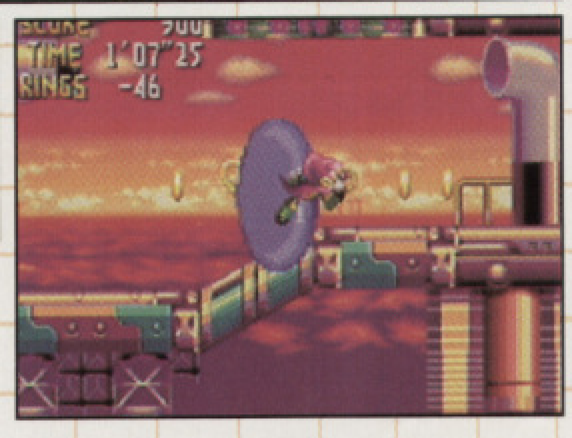








▲ ***Lose yourself in an walnut whip.***

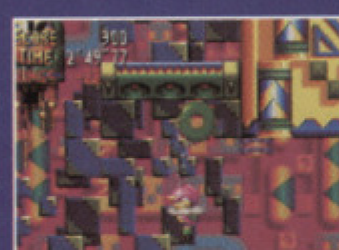


VISION ON

Graphics is one area where Chaotix is being allowed to let rip. You'll appreciate the traditional Sonic flavour of many of the backdrops and meanies, but they are far more intricate in design than any previous title, including Sonic CD. The range of colour is far greater, with the maximum number of onscreen colours almost multiplied by four.

Colour is treated boldly with some truly wacky palettes on screens like the Techno tower, and the scrolling surpasses the speediest excesses of Sonic 3. One intriguing feature on the options screen allows you to set the game to different periods of the day. Played at 'morning', 'day' 'sunset' or 'night' alters all the colouring combinations and gives the same levels a contrasting look.

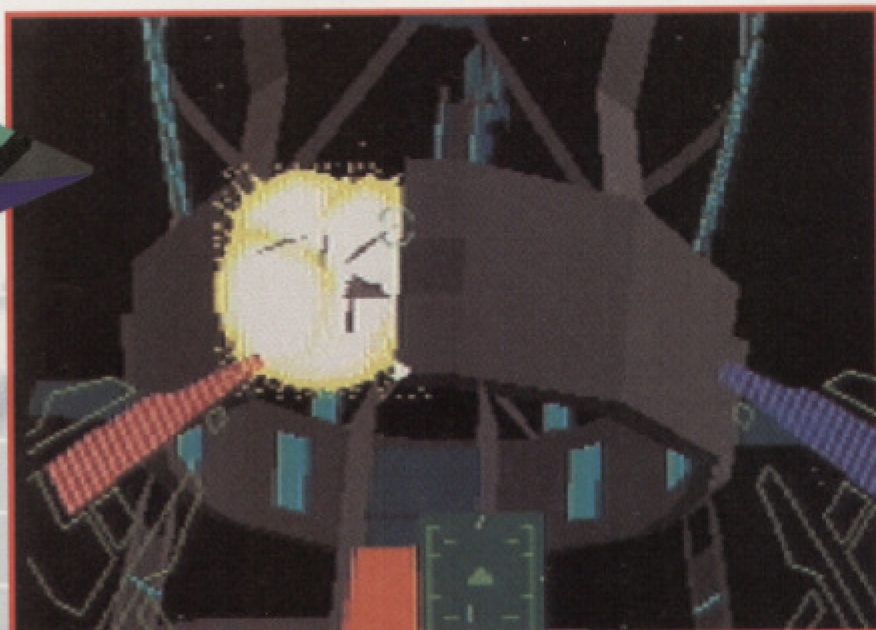
Of course, the programmers have been using scaling techniques that the 32X offers. One of the best examples is when the lead character summons the anchor character, which spins out of the screen before returning. The use of depth through scaling is employed more subtly, with hazards like spike balls coming out of the screen. Certain powers allow the characters to expand or shrink as they play.

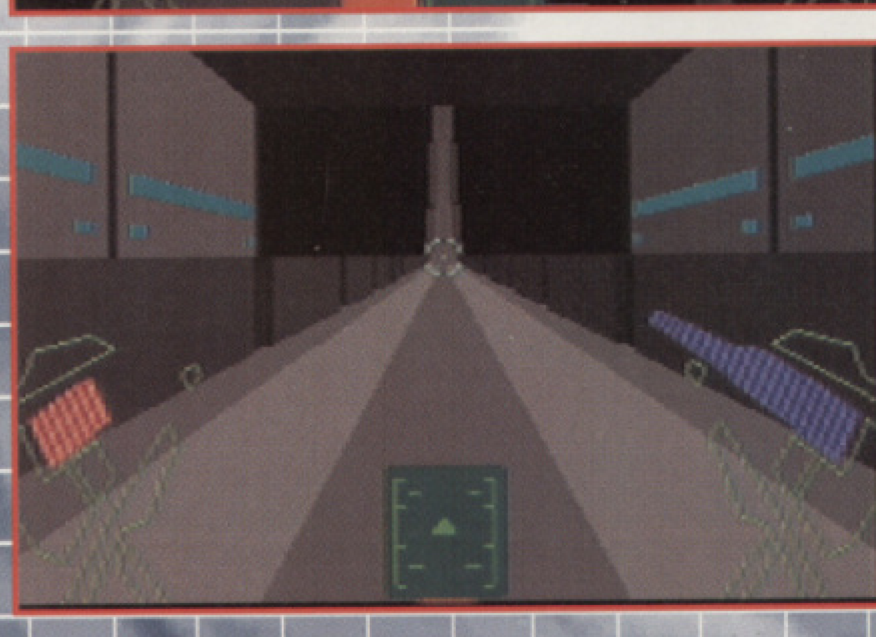




STELLAR ASSAULT





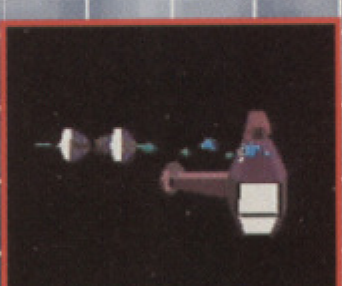


When reports of an impending alien invasion filtered through to the office, eyes turned to one man only. That man was Paul — well he is the only one with a custom built X-Wing Mk II and formal qualification in space navigation, so it made sense really...

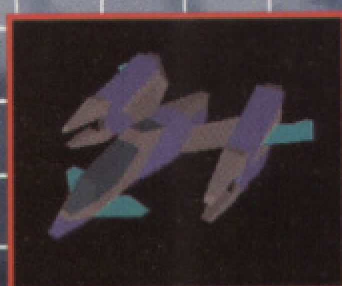
Until now Star Wars Arcade has held the monopoly on 32X space-related polygon blasting action. One of the first batch of the new breed of 32-Bit games, it alone had the tough task of demonstrating at least some of the plug-through's potential to an unconvinced gamesplaying public. And despite its limitations associated with an early development on a new system, the game shone through with some jaw-dropping visuals, the best polygon graphics to be found on Sega. That was until MEAN MACHINES caught an exclusive glimpse of the latest polygon-fest to hit the 32X — Stellar Assault.

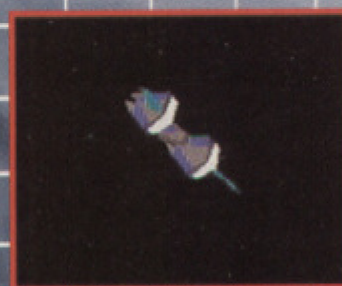
Based around a feast of missions to search and destroy enemy starships and hardware, Stellar Assault is set in an 360 degree space environment. Pushing back the linear limitations of Star Wars Arcade, the player has the choice to roam exactly where they please within each mission — a possibility due solely to the twin Hitachi processors shifting the tidy amount of 50, 000 polygons per second. Cowards may choose to place their faith in technology by using the auto-pilot option.

From all accounts Stellar Assault looks like it might just be the game to really establish the 32X among hardcore gaming circles. As ever MEAN MACHINES will bring you the in-depth review just as soon as we get our grubby paws on the finished version.



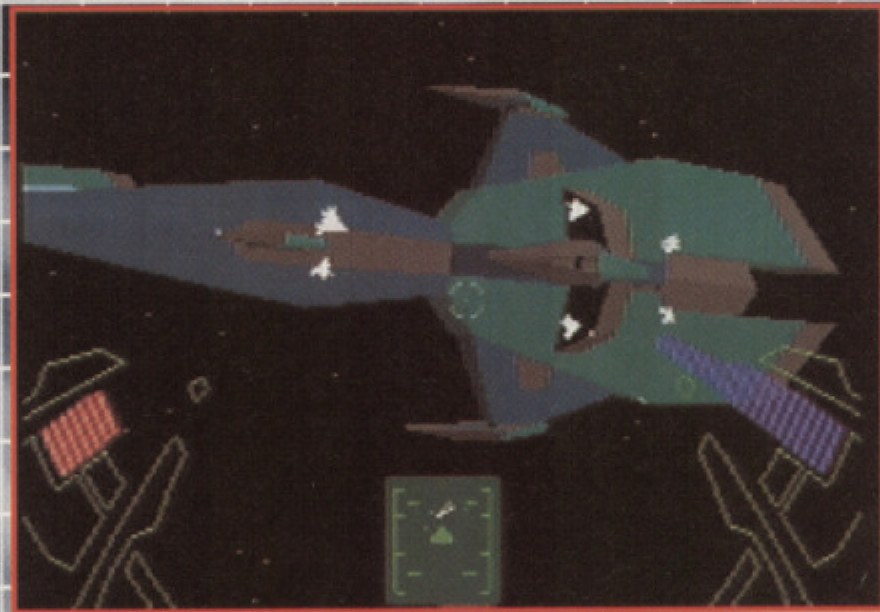










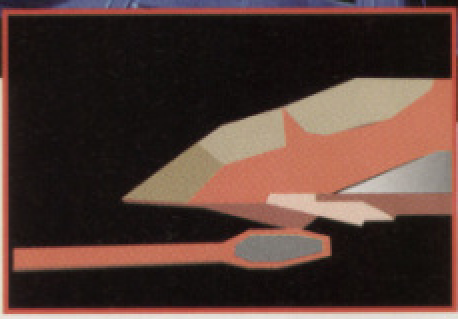


▲ *Behold the alien 'Electric Guitar Of Solomon'...*

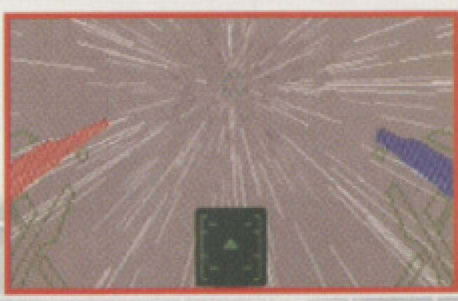


BERTH CONTROL

In their break from the linearity of Star Wars Arcade the programmers have had to compensate by giving the player more in-game guidance. Even before the ships leave orbit, the mission objectives appear on-screen detailing the exact location of all enemy ships and other obstacle. Once at loggerheads with the enemy forces, the small green radar screen keeps you informed of where to look when hunting out the remaining rogue fighters. In a far more significant technological leap, the programmers have made full use of the all-new sound chips to produce a form of running commentary for the player. As the game gets under way a voice, triggered by the Artificial Intelligence, breaks through from headquarters to advise you on new objectives or how do deal with a particular problem.







FEATHER LITE

In the polygon-generated battle against the evil enemy forces, the player has a choice of two ships. On opposite ends of the tactical attack fighters scale, Feathers 1 and 2 offer two contrasting methods of assault. Feather 1, the smaller of the two, is geared towards the experienced pilot as its manoeuvrability and acceleration offer the greatest freedom within the game environment. It does, however, suffer from a severe lack of defence shields Far stronger, but less powerful, Feather 2 is more suited to the novice star fighter. Due to its strength and size, Feather 2 is also suitable for a crew of two space buccaneers in the Pilot and Gunner option.



PROJECT
STELLAR ASSAULT

PUBLISHER
SEGA

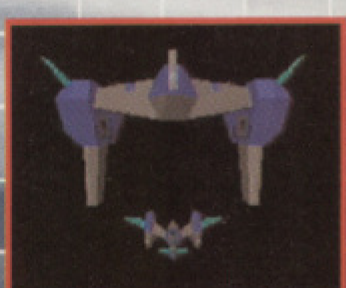
INITIATED
APRIL '94

RELEASE
JUNE '95

FORMAT
32X

DEVELOPERS
SEGA



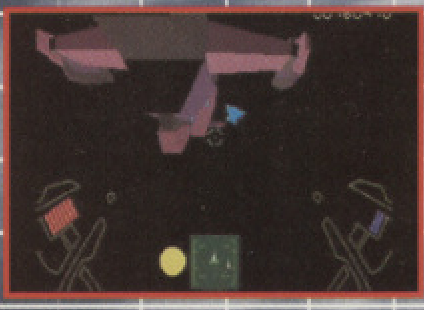






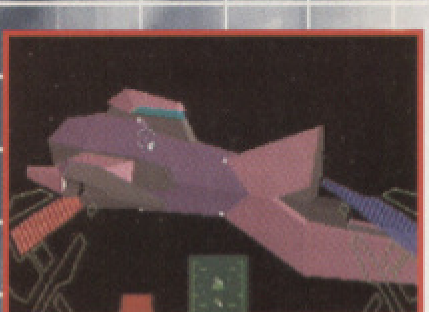


STELLAR ASSAULT









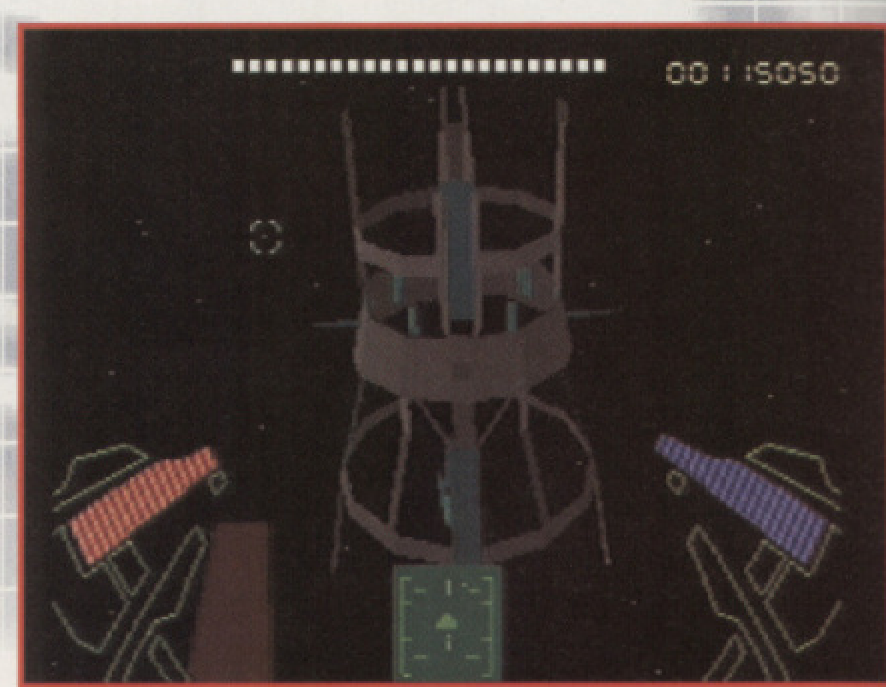
▲ We reckon this drops on Starwing from a great height.

MATES

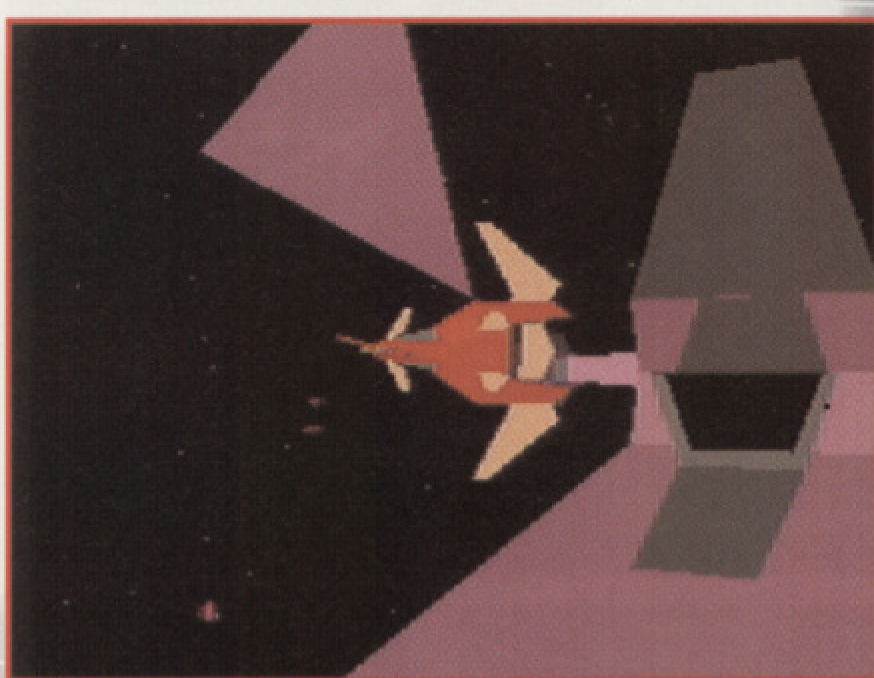
Again building on the fine tradition of Star Wars Arcade, a two player option has been included to allow one player to pilot the ship, and the other to take charge of the weapons systems. But unlike the previous 32X space fighter title, Stellar Assault requires more concentration on the part of both players thanks to the 360 degree environment. While flying the Feather 2 isn't in itself a tricky task, placing the gunner in the correct position to let off a few rounds of plasma proves to easier said than done.

MISSIONS IMPOSSIBLE

Thankfully the early missions all take place in open space — just to make sure you don't crumple any of those newly painted wings. But as the game progresses, the locations will start to become as hazardous as the enemy ships themselves. Other locations not featured in this very early version include the surface of a small planet, an asteroid belt, an enemy military base, inside of an enemy military base(!), and on an orbiting satellite.

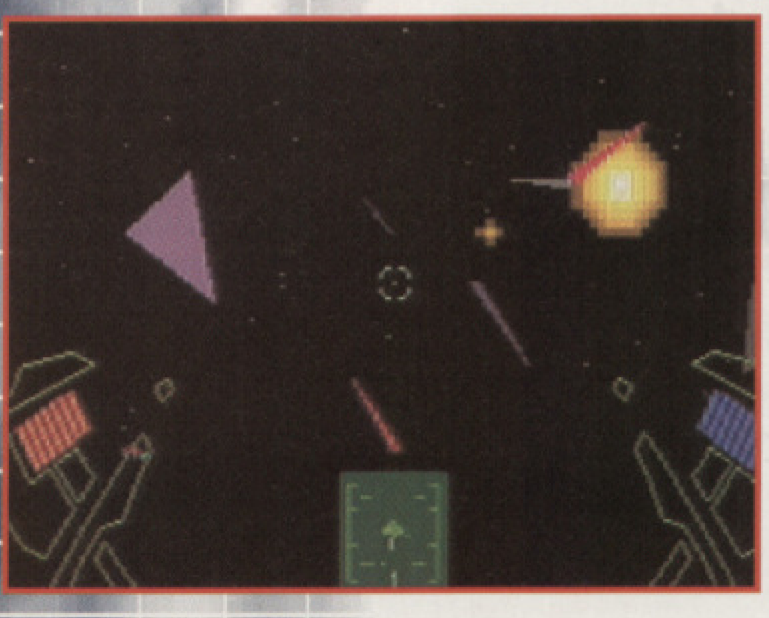


▲ This appears to be a floating waste basket. It isn't, though.



▲ Ssssk... Tronk 9 reporting. Enemy sighted. I must destroy. Sssk.





ACTION REPLAY

Even though Stellar Assault doesn't have a multiple view option, it does have a very nifty replay option called Trace Play. After you've been knocked out of the running for the interplanetary baddie blasting prize, you can watch your previous attempt in a glorious multiple camera views taken straight from Hollywood special FX wizards. The trace can be stored for as long as you want on a handy S-RAM chip in the cart along with the usual hi-scores and auto-pilot info.




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SEGA
MEGADRIVE 32X
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WORK IN PROGRESS

IZZY'S ... FOR OLYMPI...

When Steve muttered something Atlanta '96, Gus had visions of underwater civilisations. In fact, things turned out even better — a glimpse of US Gold's Olympic tie-in platformer...

US Gold is developing a cemented relationship with the Olympic games. When the games of the 23rd Olympiad (Olympiad refers to the four-year gap between, not the event itself, pedant fans) are held in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996, US Gold will have long since published the official platform game of the Games. Looking back, US Gold has accompanied the 1992 Barcelona games and 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics with sport compilations across a raft of formats. Whether a similar Olympic Gold style project emerges remains to be seen. At the moment, IZZY'S Quest for the Olympic Rings is a departure from event-mimicking gameplay.

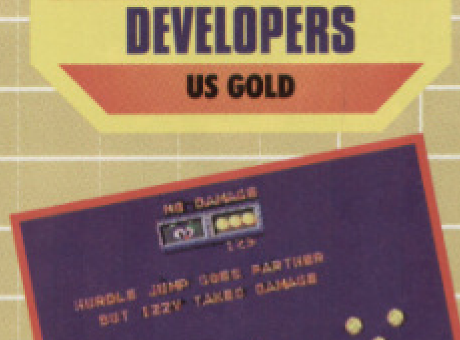
IZZY is the official Atlanta '96 mascot. One thing you learn quickly in publishing is that you don't mess with official Olympic mascots. They are the Royalty that lawsuits are made of. Everywhere they go a line of copyright text follows. You always put their name in block-capitals, and you don't fart in their presence. Unless it's a complete emergency.

IZZY joins a hallowed list of mascots which we all know, love and couldn't recall even under hypnosis. There was COBI — the dancing Russian bear from 1980; THINGI — the cute little man from Barcelona (who worked summers in Fawlty Towers); and DOO-DAA — the funny little Asian cat from Seoul '88, who had a streamer coming out his head (cats are revered and also considered very tasty in Korea).

Which brings us to IZZY. Defying all animal connections, he looks suspiciously like the first vegetable mascot: A smirking blue potato. Well, he's not actually a potato, but one can't help butthink that, and he has an entourage of other unsettling fruits in drag. And they caper joyously in Quest for the Rings as Izzy sets to restore the five rings from the rotten veggies who have purloined them.

PROJECT	IZZY'S QUEST FOR THE RINGS
PUBLISHER	US GOLD
INITIATED	APRIL' 94
RELEASE	MAY'95
FORMAT	MEGADRIVE
DEVELOPERS	US GOLD





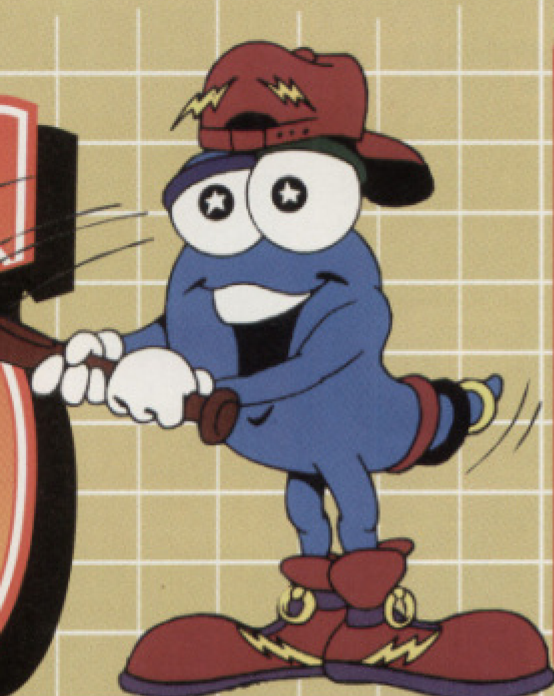


▲ *Don't worry IZZY, you can get creams for them.*

MEDALLION MAN

The game design for IZZY is not intended to be outstandingly original. The emphasis is going on playability, and wide appeal across the age ranges. The pretty backgrounds and platform layouts look a bit like Sonic games, but are closer in play terms to Virgin's Cool Spot. However, careful layout planning has the purpose of making the game non-linear, allowing players to explore for bonuses, and find alternate paths through the game. Much time is spent collecting medals and laurels. One brush with the enemy is enough to place IZZY in dire danger — death follows with the next touch, and there are many creepy enemies and sharp edges to fall foul of. Three shiny medals have to be collected to take him off the critical list.

S QUEST R THE IC RINGS



CRACKING UP

The designers are absolutely stuffing IZZY'S quest with hidden bonuses. Hidden areas reside in the backgrounds, taking IZZY out of view for egg-hunts. The spotted sphericals also nestle in the eaves under platforms, sometimes several in the same place. Fast reflexes are needed to avoid the occasional rotten eggs which give no warning of their foul-smelling innards until opened.





THE ELDER CHALLENGE

The mysteriously titled 'Elder Challenges' occur intermittently. It has still to be decided if entry to these between level bonus games is awarded on a points or time basis. They are a complete departure from the main game, including interstellar rocket trips and space walks.



BREAKING THE TAPE

One of the most interesting features of IZZY is best described as the sub-level feat. At various points throughout the levels IZZY is required to perform an athletic move or a trying sequence of obstacles (two early examples are the flying sequence in Ancient Greece and the Long Jump). If you rise to these challenges with enough panache, some of IZZY'S mates pop on from the sides of the screen and offer an enthusiastic veggie thumbs up. On the other hand, dismal failure suffers the humiliation of a derisive thumbs down from the allotment crowd.



▲ *Bottom bouncing IZZY style. (© Informative Captions, Inc.)*

CHARACTER ACTOR

The programmers want IZZY to hold your attention — even if he's not doing anything — so a whole range of animations are being incorporated with which to entertain you when IZZY is left for more than a few seconds. One of the nicest sequences shows IZZY playing with the rings that hang on his tail. A tail that also clinches the fact that he's not a potato, but a relative of Jimmy Somerville.



▲ *To little IZZY, Spud-U-Like is like cannibalism.*



▲ *If... I... Could... Just... Reach... That... Butterfly...*



▲ *Look, IZZY's turned into a big rocket. Coo!*





▲ *Official Licensed Product of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, Inc.*



HEY MORPH, ARE YOU COMING OUT TO PLAY?

The function of shape-changing is second-nature to our plucky Pomme de Terre. It's is enabled by the many starry morph points positioned throughout the levels, and disengaged by the accompanying flags. There are around eight animated morph states to turn IZZY into. Not all are strictly related to Olympian pursuits, but they do show off IZZY as a kind of energetic, outdoor kind of spud. He takes to the air on a hanglider contraption, goes en garde with a fencing epee and takes a firm grip of a baseball bat at various points.

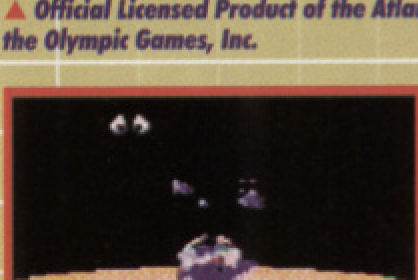




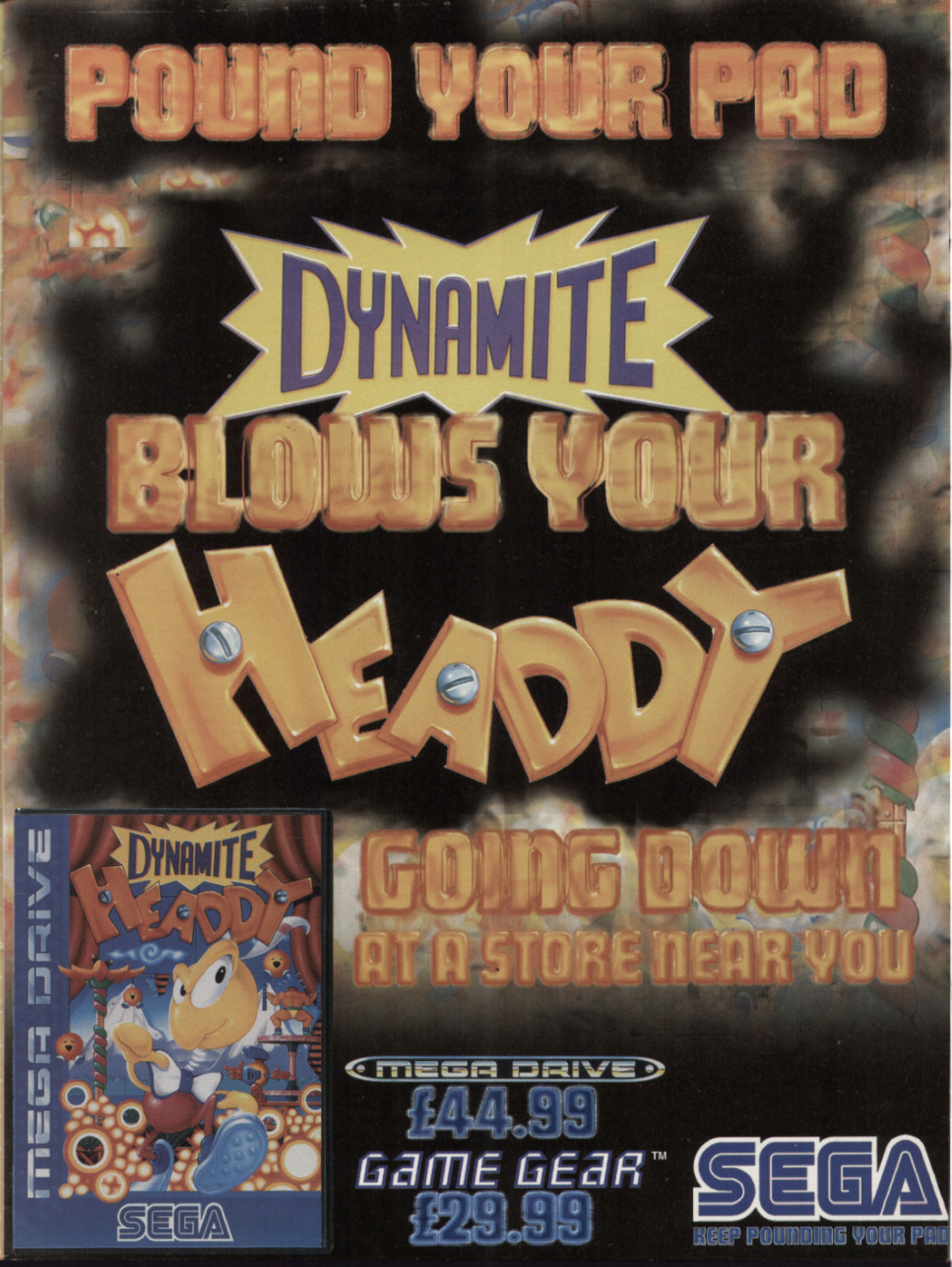


LET'S GET BIZZY

A demo mode is tagged onto the front of the game to make sure you are familiar with the controls and features that occupy the game. A brief introduction of the Ring stealing baddies is included, who you will meet in the form of stage bosses during the quest.



▲ *Yeah, we feel like that about Boyzone, too.*

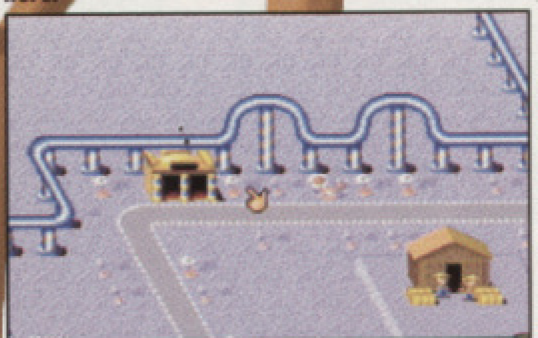

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1 PLAYERS	
16 MEG	
RELEASE	APRIL
BY	BULLFROG
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SIMULATION
PERCENT COMPLETE	

THEME



▲ The nifty title screen of the floppy version is here.


▲ We named this super rollercoaster the 'Barbara Windsor'. Oh, matron!

1995 sees a new 'synergy' between one of the world's largest software publishers (EA) and a globally respected developer (Bullfrog). The first fruit of this new phase of labour will be Theme Park, which MEAN MACHINES first saw in late 1994.

At that time, with coding at its early stages, Bullfrog were promising a full-blooded version of the award-winning simulation which was a massive hit on the floppy computer formats. Despite a clutch of technical difficulties, they pretty much seem to have done it. From our latest investigations, your getting a version of Theme Park for your £80 Megadrive comparable to the game performing on a £800 PC.

The game concept is both simple and complex, depending on how you approach it. Your role is proprietor of a brand new Theme Park. So new it is yet to be built. Bullfrog present you with a icon-driven interface and a large plot of turf (probably somewhere outside Blackburn) and the rest is up to you. You can eventually build MegaWorld in sunny California, indeed that is part of your aim, but you have to make a success of Scumland in the drizzly UK first. For although building ghost trains and spreading gaiety is all part of the fun, making bucks is a constant consideration.

Like all Bullfrog games, you are only part of the cast. Just as important are the little people. Theme Park has a cast of thousands, individuals who come to your park and expect to be entertained. Once they've past the gates, you may monitor their moods and actions to see if they are as enthusiastic about your park as you are. Too many unprofitable years and its time to dive off a yacht in the Caribbean (sorry, the park staff don't have a pension fund).

Theme Park is near comple and we're virtually assured of taking a reviewable ride around it next issue. Fasten your seatbelts and join us!











PARK



▲ *My fave junk food joint is the lard bar. Lard burgers, dripping milshakes etc.*

SUPPLY SIDE ECONOMICS



A few of the features of the floppy version of Theme Park have been missed out, but their passing will not be mourned that greatly. Previously, you were required to maintain the stock of the food and shopping outlets in your park, by referring to a separate screen. The problem with this feature was the rate at which supplies would run out. Re-ordering didn't require that much insight and was distinctly laborious. This has been dumped and stocks now replenish themselves automatically. You are still free to tinker with the profit margin on retailed goods, and even doctor them to reduce costs (the old ice-in-the-coke-trick). Another of the trickier features of the game was setting up patrol routes for the park's cleaners. Without them, the rubbish would pile up, even with vast numbers of staff. Now the park's employees show a more intelligent attitude and actively search out garbage. Another bane was exploding rides. Some of the early attractions would break down extremely quickly, explode and ruin the park layout. In the tweaked Megadrive game the breakdown cycle is much more sensible, and only the most negligent or sadistic park owner would allow a catastrophe to occur.





Hey kids, come and see wacky and dacky, our fun-loving dolphins, who we keep in tiny pools and feed dead fish!



NOVELTY RIDES

The new Theme Park has more rides than its predecessor, 27 in all. Many of the favourites are retained, including the rollercoaster and tubing, with some great new additions — the bizarre underground worm ride and sub ride amongst them. Each has its own theme tune, which plays when it is featured on screen. When the music starts to go wonky, its a signal that the ride needs renovating.



1 PLAYER	RELEASE	MAY
	BY	SEGA
16 MEG	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP

PERCENT COMPLETE

ALIEN SOLDIER

Without a doubt one of the highlights of last year was the stupendously fantastic Gunstar Heroes. Never has quite so much good-natured blasting fun been in one place at the same time. That was until the same programming team, coders supreme Treasure, resumed work on the project sidelined to make way for Dynamite Headdy. A project which is to take the words 'platform' and 'blaster' and redefine their meaning.

As expected, Alien Soldier maintains the fine tradition of a side-on scrolling blasterama at the expense of ugly-looking aliens, but these aren't your everyday sort of aliens. Be prepared to confront some of the biggest, baddest, and bossiest enemies on a very regular basis. Very regular meaning every couple of seconds, as some psychotic game freak of a programmer has seen fit to fill the levels with boss character after boss character. You don't believe us? Well just feast your eyes on the platform blaster to end all platform blasters.

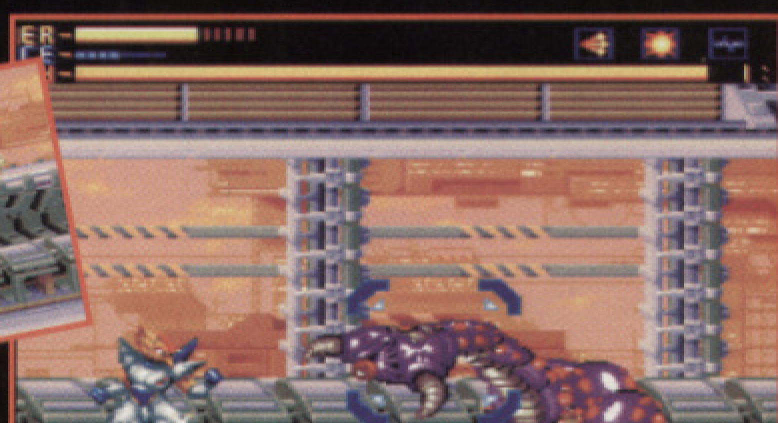
SHOOTING MATCH

Before you even get into the blasting action, the player has to select four weapons for use within their mission. From a choice of six weapon options, ranging from your standard spread blaster to the spot-on power precision of the homing shot, you can call up a weapon selection screen to pick any weapon at any time. While this may seem advantageous when confronting all of the various critters and bosses, it is also useful to know that there is no such thing as infinite ammo in the gritty world of Alien Soldier. Weapons run out of juice after an alarmingly short time. The useful 'pick and mix' ups also make fly-bys to restore the energy levels and re-load tools of the soldiering trade.







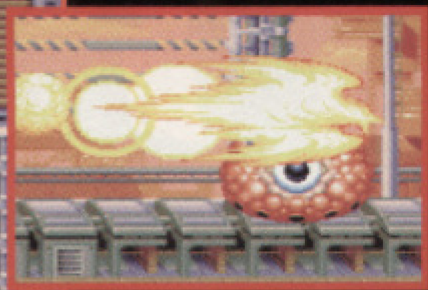


▼The fighting machine no longer answers to the name Orville.











◀ The owner of Vision Xpress is unveiled.

▼Wahey! A forest level. Me next for the Ice World.

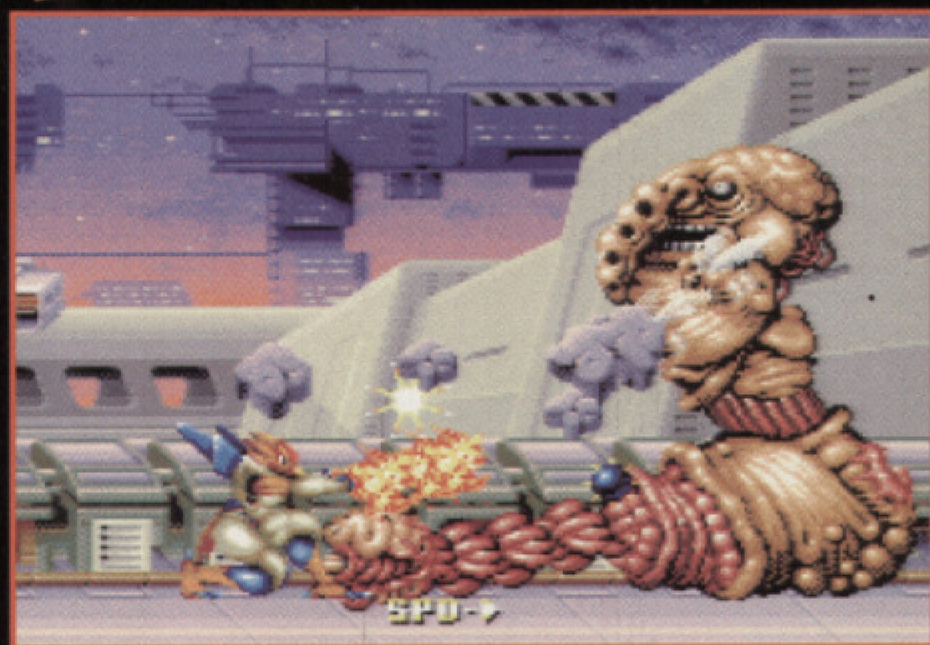




▼Come meet Luga the operatic mutant.







STREETFIGHTING MAN

The central character is, in addition to his gun-toting skills, blessed with the ability to perform special moves. In a Streetfighter/ Mortal Kombat style of keypad movements, beak-face can zoom across the screen at intense velocity and take a fair chunk out of the enemy forces.

THE BIG BOYS

The standard formula of fighting through a level to the end boss has been turned, quite literally, on its head. There's no such thing as battling through the small fry, instead the levels are constructed of confrontations with boss characters. One after another, after another! And these aren't your standard bosses, because from all accounts the design team at Treasure have been working overtime to produce a collection of the most original and explosive sprites to grace the Megadrive.

▼I've had days when that's happened. Really I have.



▼A huge pestilent mole enters the fray (not pictured).





FAHRE

PLAYERS	1
RELEASE	APRIL
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	INTERACTIVE MOVIE

PERCENT COMPLETE



▲ ***Don't say we didn't warn you of the danger of over-filling your chip pans...***

There are two contrasting views of fire-men, fire-women and what they do. In America, thanks to the image set by Backdraft, it's all Kurt Russell looka-likes, derring-do and busty blondes hanging out of skyscraper windows, waiting to grab the emergency services by the overalls. Over here it's long shifts spent in an ugly station in Peckham, 'Sicknote's' cooking, and the only sex interest is what the missus is up to on the long winter nightshifts.

So what do we make of Fahrenheit, Sega's feisty, not to say fiery new interactive movie. Created by Sega's own multi-media studio it plays in much the same way as previous CD-ROMs from Midnight Raiders to Power Rangers. The novelty is the fire-fighting subject matter.

Players are taken through a series of filmed levels, with choices of direction to take at doors, corridors and stairs. The purpose is to locate the trapped occupants of the fires whilst protecting yourself from the conflagrations. Fahrenheit is almost complete and is most likely to be reviewed in the next flaming hot (sorry) issue of this mag.

SHINING FORCE CD

PLAYERS	1
RELEASE	APRIL
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	STRATEGY GAME

PERCENT COMPLETE

In Japan the small niche that the Mega-CD has is taken up with RPGs, strategy games, adventures and nutters running around casting magic spells and wielding broadswords. Ironically, adventure games with all their mediaeval paraphernalia are more popular there than they have ever been here.

Within that genre, Shining Force is the most successful series that Sega have produced. Part strategy game and part RPG, the two large Megadrive games (the original Shining Force was the biggest game on the Megadrive at one point) worked by injecting pace into games which are usually slow by nature.

Shining Force CD is actually a compilation of the two Shining Force Adventures released for the Game Gear in Japan. Things have been tarted up for the Mega-CD with graphics which closely match the Megadrive games, and an impressive CD soundtrack. Gameplay is much the same as previous games, so Shining Force addicts will be awaiting its release eagerly. A review, we promise, next issue.



NHEIT

HOT! HOT! HOT!

Fahrenheit shows that budgets and production standards are steadily improving with each release. Once the Sega movie titles were derided for 'Cell Block H' quality sets and equally cardboard acting. Whilst not up to the effects and cast quality of Backdraft, Fahrenheit seems to capture the visual impact of a house fire quite well. The technical innovations of instant response and Truvideo are also used.



GET TO BLAZES

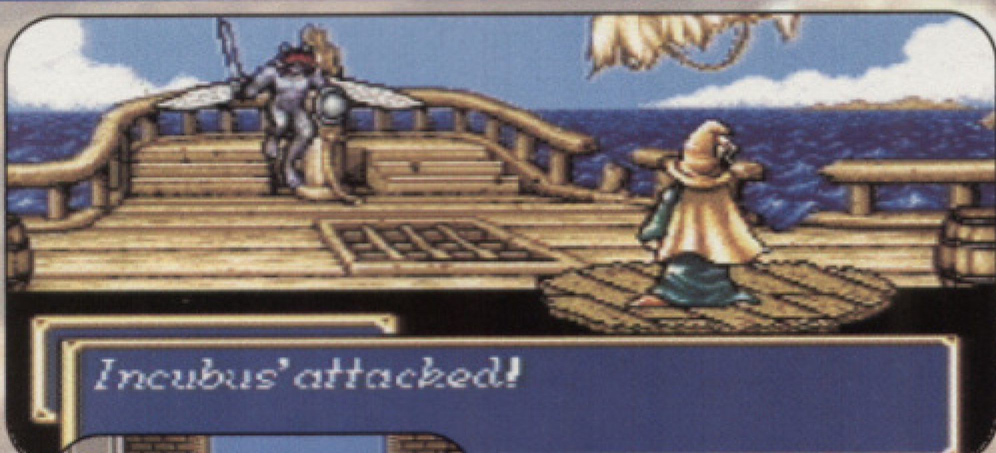
We must confess to being a tad disappointed at this stage that hoses don't play a major part in Fahrenheit. Who cares about citizens in peril when you can be squirting gallons all over the shop. Finding these pesky tenants is a matter of looking for clues quickly as the fireman scans the room, and being intuitive about the house layouts.













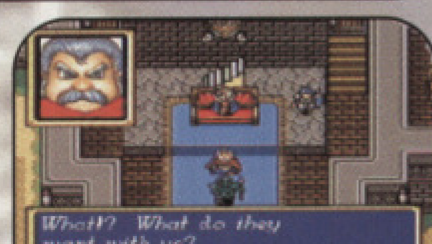


BIG IN JAPAN

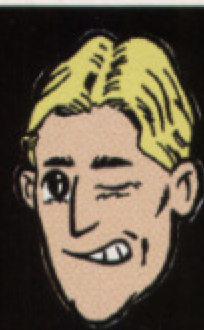
The reason the CD game took so long to arrive from Japan is the amount of text contained in the average Shining Force epic. Whole Megabytes of memory are taken up with the comments, hints, clues, storyline and funnies that utter forth from all and sundry. All this has to be translated, which is a mammoth task. Literal translations don't work, as many of the sayings of Japanese mean nothing here. That's why Shining Force sounds slightly quirky sometimes.



▲ T'was on the good ship Venus, by God you should have seen us. The figurehead was a...



PAUL'S TIPS



Hi there tipsters, and welcome to the regular low-down on the toppest tips to be found. Once again we have some quite astoundingly good cheats and tips, all thanks to the crack teams of tipmoungers slaving over hot consoles. What's more, we have three toptastic guides to keep you on the straight and narrow — Activision's fab revamp of the classic platformer, Pitfall; the second part to puzzle problemer Bubble and Squeak; and a blast from the past with the ultimate collection of Sonic cheats from over the years! Get a load of that! Don't forget to send in those cheats to: HAM, BEANS, AND TIPS, PAUL'S TIPS, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32, FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

NHL HOCKEY '95

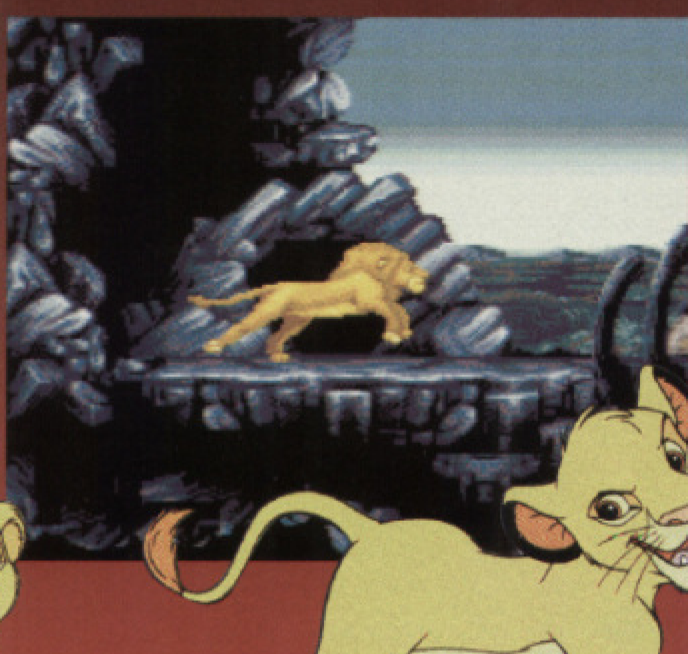
REPLAY PLAYOFF

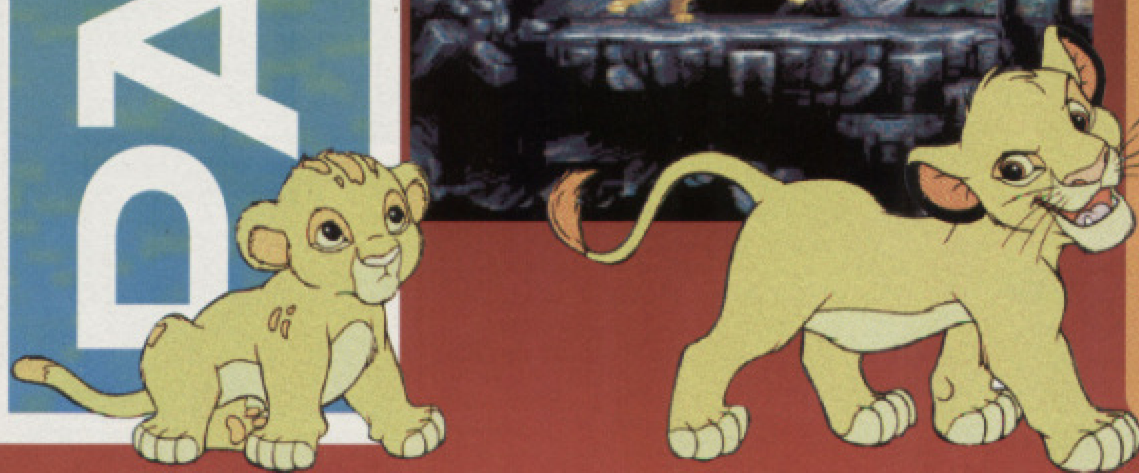
For all of you having problems reaching the heights of the playoffs in EA's ice hockey bonanza, Colm Scott from Dublin could have the answer for you. When losing in a playoff, press RESET in the dying seconds of the game. When you return to the Options screen you will be able to replay the same game. Cool!

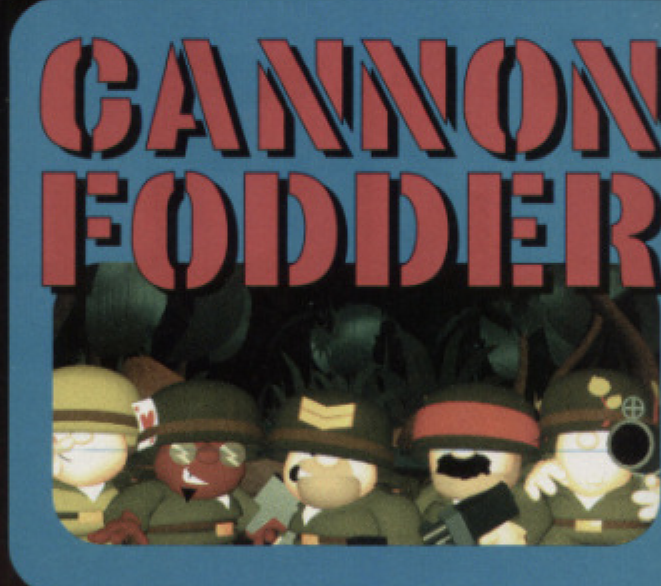
LION KING

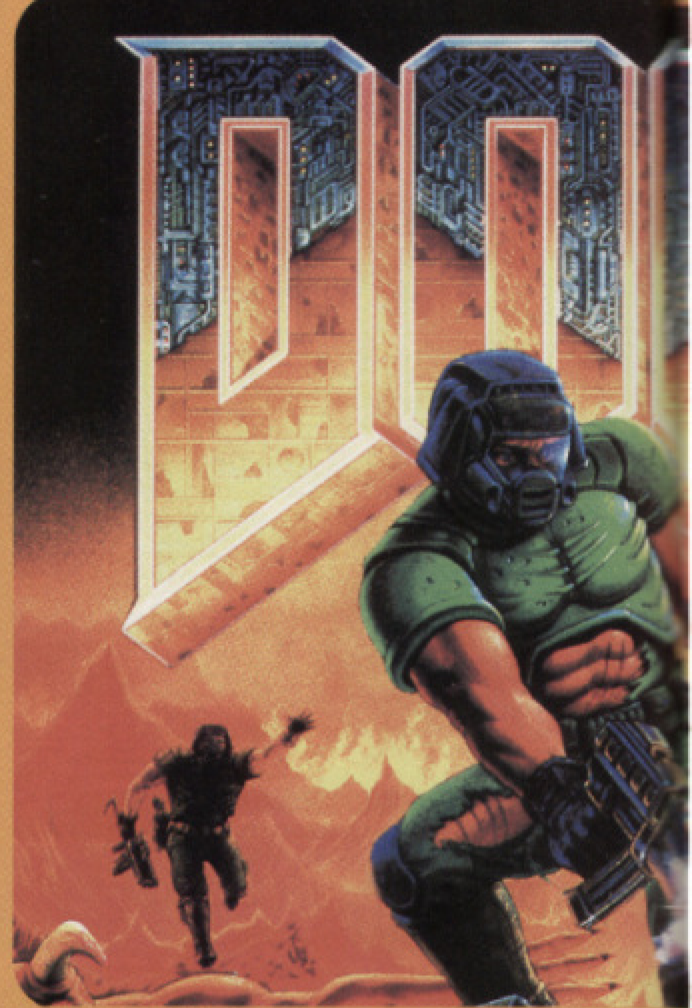
LEVEL SELECT

Last month we had the level selects for both the Master System and the Game Gear, so now it's time the Megadrive received the same treatment. Andrew Crowley of Rotherham, S. Yorkshire comes up trumps. On the Options screen press RIGHT, A, A, B, and START to select the level of your choice by pushing LEFT and RIGHT.









INVINCIBILITY, WEAPONS, AMMO, AND KEYS CHEATS

Once again Doom takes its place at the top of the tipping table with some absolutely stonking cheats from Stuart Cameron, Glasgow. As in the PC version you can switch on hidden options allowing you to play in both invincible 'God Mode' and with all of the weapons, ammo, and keys to boot! A word of warning — you do need a six button pad to access the cheats.

GOD MODE

There's no stopping our marine now with his

LEVEL COMPLETE AND CODES

According to Peter Croft from Hatfield, there is an easy way to complete any stage in this excellent blaster. All you have to do is kill all your men until you have only one left. Once he has begun to move, quit the game by pressing the white flag icon, and hey presto, you will have completed the mission and have 15 men or more.

LEVEL CODES

To polish off our trip into Cannon Fodder cheatdom here are a couple of codes to keep you going.
UVQBG
GSFNB
FBLQC



100% percent invincibility powers activated. To enter the mode simply pause the game and press X, Z, MODE (the button on the top-right edge of the pad), and UP all at the same time. You'll know the cheat has worked when the marine's eyes glaze over.

ALL WEAPONS, AMMO, AND KEYS

In a similar way you can instantly stock up on everything you could possibly need to deal with the hordes of hell. Press PAUSE to access the cheat and enter A, C, MODE, and UP at the same time.

SPARKSTER

ROCKETKNIGHT ADVENTURES 2

FINAL PART OF LEVEL CODES

As promised the final instalment of the Sparkster codes. This month we cover the final levels of all the difficulty selections. Enjoy!



KICK OFF 3

INVISIBLE BALL AND SUPER BOUNCE

A wee tippet here for all of you in possession of a Kick Off 3 cart, thanks to Jayne Dean of Derby. When playing a two-player game, press all three buttons and the ball will turn invisible. Once the invisibility has worn off, the ball will have super bounce-ability. Smart.



BONUS LIVES AND LEVEL CODES

The pick 'n' flick champion of Boogerville is next up for the Paul's Tips treatment courtesy of Ben Kirkby, Lyme Regis, Dorset. Apparently on the second level of the Nasal Caverns, if you go down the toilet and collect all of the extra lives, you can leave the toilet and kill yourself. Not very useful you might say, but if you return down said toilet, you will find the extra lives are once more ripe for the picking. Repeat as necessary.

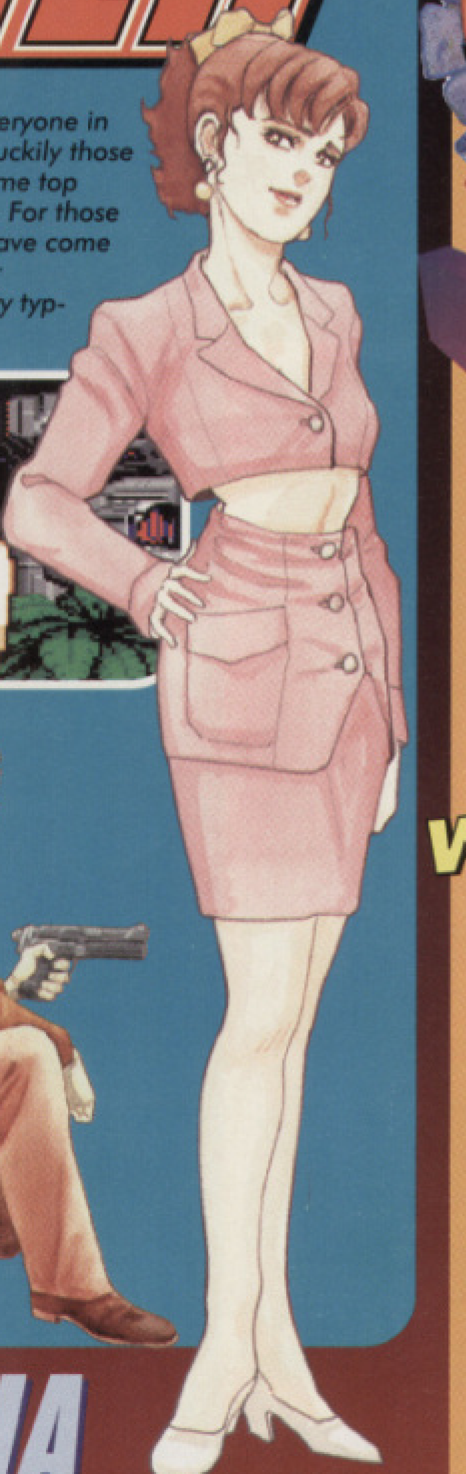
LEVEL CODES

LEVEL	CODE
FIRST BOSS (HICKBOY)	GHOST, SOLDIER, GHOST, BLOBBY
LEVEL TWO	BLOBBY, RED THING, GHOST, BOOGERMAN
SECOND BOSS (REVOLTA)	ORANGE THING, MINER, SOLDIER, GHOST
BOOGERVILLE	RED THING, GHOST, WHITE THING, BOOGERMAN
THIRD BOSS (FLY BOY)	BOOGERMAN, BLOBBY, MINER, RED THING
MUCOUS MOUNTAIN	SOLDIER, RED THING, GHOST, ORANGE THING
NASAL CAVERNS	SOLDIER, BLOBBY, CAVEMAN, RED THING
FOURTH BOSS (DEODORANT)	GHOST, RED THING, ORANGE THING, MINER
PUS PALACE	BLOBBY, BOOGERMAN, GHOST, BLOBBY
BOOGER MEISTER	BLOBBY, WHITE THING, BOOGERMAN, MINER



SNATCHER

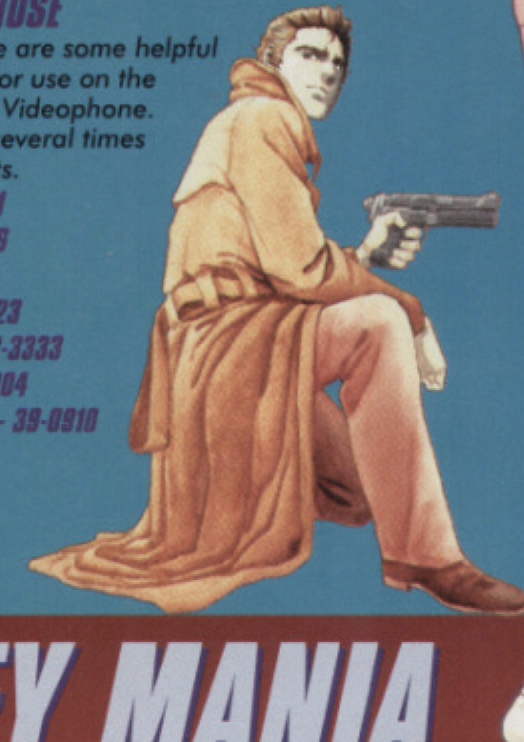




A truly worthy Mega-CD title, Snatcher had everyone in the office glued to the daily plot revelations. Luckily those guys from Konami have been in touch with some top notch tips that you may not have come across. For those of you who have played the game, you may have come across the Jordan Computer Systems at Junker Headquarters. For some bizarre happenings try typing in these names:



MICHAEL
KIMBERLY
KIRITA
KOJIMA
SASAKI
TOGO
JEREMY
SAITOU
INAMARU
ADACHI
KUSHIBUCHINOSE



What's more here are some helpful phone numbers for use on the Metal Gear MK2 Videophone. Repeat the calls several times for the best results.

SASAKI — 79-6641
JEREMY — 41-6766
TOGO — 44-6454
NAMURA — 44-3723
KUSHIBUCHI — 33-3333
ISABELLA — 39-6004
CUPID LOVE LINE — 39-0910

MICKEY MANIA

HIDDEN BONUSES

Steven Hodges has sent in a top guide to some of the best hidden moments in Mickey's platform adventure.

STEAM BOAT WILLIE

Make your way to the crane and wait until the crane puts two crates on top of each other. Jump on the crates, and when the crane comes across with another crate, quickly jump on it and onto the opposite platform for a 1-Up.

MAD DOCTOR

Once you've reached the top of the lift section, walk off the lift and then back on and you will be taken to a secret room full of stars and a Mad Doctor Mickey.

GARDEN LEVEL

In the second part of this level, make your way to the top-right where you will find a switch. Jump on the beetle with its wings open and push the switch. Now go to the bottom left where a platform will have appeared. Jump on the butterflies to reach the platform and you will find a few stars, a 1-Up, and the question mark for the bonus level.



MR NUTZ

W. Ennis from Liverpool has sent in a short, but useful list of codes for Mr Nutz.

Level 2 — MAGICS
Level 3 — GOLDEN
Level 4 — WINDOW
Level 5 — CASPER
Level 6 — PIZZAS

WOLVERINE



For all of you having problems with Marvel's number one adamantium clad super hero, Andi Fordham from Langley, Berks, has the answer with some handy codes.

Level 2 — MARIKO
Level 3 — SILVER FOX
Level 4 — DEPARTMENT H
Level 5 — MADRIPOOR
Level 6 — ASANO
Level 7 — THE HUDSONS

Although every care is taken to make sure the cheats work, please don't blame us if they don't. We don't do it on purpose, honest…

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THE COMPLETE SONIC TIPS GUIDE



Through the years of development and change in the Sega games market, one thing has remained constant — Sonic the Hedgehog. And never before has one subject caused so much trouble for tips writers across the land. In anticipation of Chaotix on the 32X, the MEAN MACHINES team have knocked their heads together, taken a stroll down memory lane, to piece together the essential guide to tips and cheats throughout the Sonic years.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



LEVEL SELECT

The original level select is here to grace these hallowed tips pages once more. Believe it or not, I still receive letters to the tips pages with this original cheat. Long before the days of accessing sound tests and Super Sonics why don't you dig deep in that cupboard, dust off the old box, and play this timeless classic once more. To activate the Level Select simply enter UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, hold A, and press START when the Sega logo fades to black.

SONIC 2

LEVEL SELECT

Enter Tails and the two player option into the Sonic legend, and here you have it, Sonic 2. For Level Select, you must go to the Sound Test. In this option enter numbers 19, followed by 65, 09, and 17. After press A and hold START.



COMPLETE GAME AND EMERALDS IN FIRST LEVEL

For all those impatient Sonic players across the land, it is possible to complete the entire game by completing all 50 Chaos Emeralds in the first level. First off you have to go to the OPTIONS and select Tails only. Now start the game on level 1.1 and collect 50 rings to enter the Bonus Stage. You must complete the Bonus Stage and collect the Emerald to make the cheat work. Now, as the points are totting up hit the RESET button and enter the OPTIONS once again. Go to the top box, select Tails and start the game over. As before, collect 50 rings to access the Bonus Stage. If you successfully complete this stage once more, you will find the first Emerald is still counted. Repeat this process until you have all 50 Emeralds and the game is yours.







INFINITE LIVES IN TWO PLAYER VERSUS MODE

To set Tails' lives counter at -9, stop Sonic on the Mystic Cave zone and force Tails onto the spikes. Once he has disposed all of his lives the counter should read -9, which to you and me means infinite Tails two player fun!



SUPER TAILS

As with the Level Select, a visit to the Sound Test is necessary. Input 19, 65, 09, and 17. Now press A and START on the Title Screen for the Level Select, but return to the Sound Test. This time enter 04, 01, 02, 06, 01, 09, 09, 02, 01, 01, 02, and 04. Now before you choose a level hold DOWN, A, and START. By using the Debug make 50 rings in the level, after which if you jump into the air, you will become Super Sonic. To make a Super Tails, turn into a Teleport Box and press C — Sonic and Tails will both be Super-dooper!

SONIC 3







LEVEL SELECT

One of *the* hottest tips of last summer, the Sonic 3 Level Select was the cause of many a distressed gamer phoning in because they couldn't make it work. The tip is correct, but the key to making it work is speed. The following key presses have to be entered at the speed of light when the Sega logo fades to black — UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, UP, UP, UP, and UP. If you press down on the Title Screen Option, another will appear.

DEBUG

Identical to the Level Select, but by holding down the A button you can play to your heart's content with the sprite variations.

DANCING SONIC?!

Well this isn't technically a tip or a cheat, but a strange occurrence nevertheless. Apparently you can make Sonic breakdance by using the Level Select and then resetting your Megadrive and hold A to activate the DEBUG mode. Go to any level and press A, B, and C and watch Sonic freak out!

SONIC SPINBALL

BILLIONS OF POINTS!

Not what you'd call chocker with cheats and tips, Spinball is an extremely fine pinball outing for the blue blur. The only one tip I know of is to hold down A, B, and C after you have completed a level and the points should shoot through the sky.

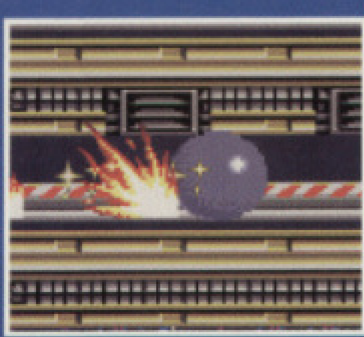




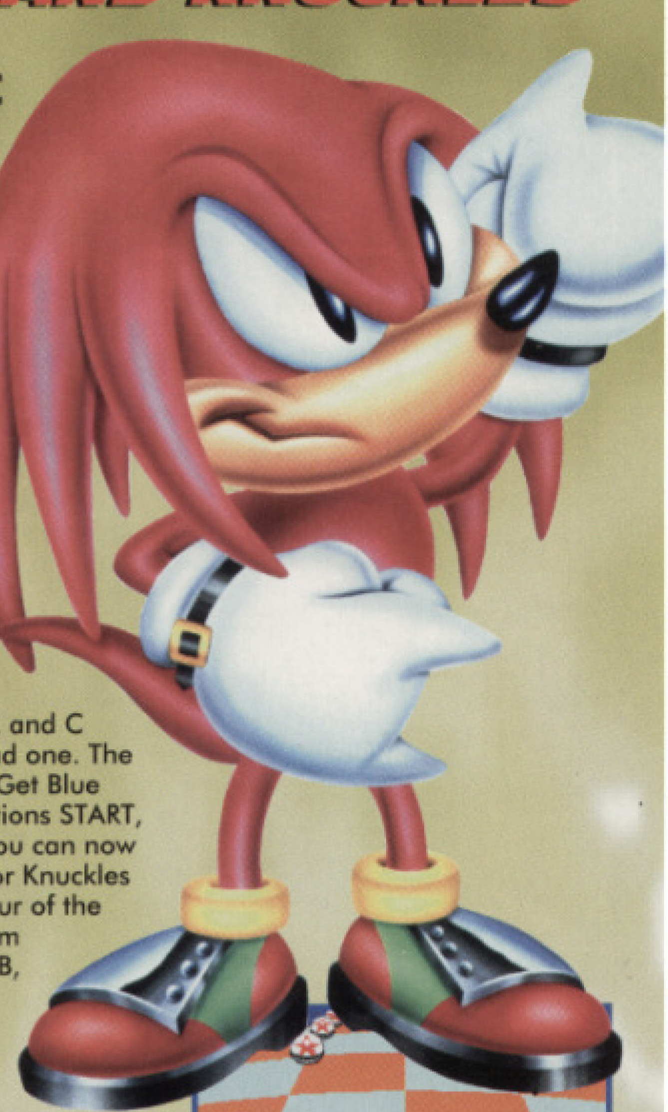
SONIC CD

LEVEL SELECT

Once again it's a Title Screen input situation. Quite simply tap in UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, B, and START.



SONIC AND KNUCKLES



PLAY SONIC 1 WITH THE SONIC AND KNUCKLES CART

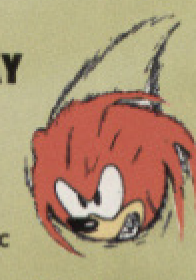
What's all this 'No Way' business? 'Yes Way' you can play Sonic 1 with the world's first backwardly compatible cart. Plug Sonic 1 into the slot on top of Sonic and Knuckles, and when the screen with Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, and Egg Face appears, all saying 'No Way', press A, B, and C simultaneously on pad one. The screen will now say 'Get Blue Spheres' with the options START, LEVEL, and CODE. You can now play as either Sonic or Knuckles by changing the colour of the stars on the icons from blue to red (press A, B, or C to change colours). You can change the codes to access different levels of the Special Stage by altering the numbers and pressing START.



Level 1	3659	8960	3263
Level 2	2965	3192	9023
Level 3	3610	2354	7327
Level 4	2921	0274	3999
Level 5	3737	7423	1487
Level 6	3053	9029	9071
Level 7	3698	8191	7375
Level 8	3009	6111	4047
Level 9	3482	7286	3167
Level 10	2809	6267	2575
Level 11	3454	5429	0879
Level 12	2765	3348	7551
Level 13	3582	0497	5039
Level4	12898	2104	2623



ACTION REPLAY CODES



Now it's not often that I print Action Replay codes, but in the case of Sonic and Knuckles and the absence of any other cheats here are the codes.

FFFFE00001	LEVEL SELECT
FFFE090001	DEBUG MODE
FFFE120009	INFINITE LIVES
FFFE180099	INFINITE CONTINUES
FFFE24000F	INFINITE TIME







Always out on a limb, Pitfall Harry Jr has been swinging out on the Megadrive and Mega-CD for a couple of months now. Out to free his dad, the hero of the original Atari 2600 game, Harry has some work to do if he wants to succeed. As ever Paul has scouted ahead through the jungle to clear a path for you to follow. Whips to the ready as we enter the ancient civilisation of the Mayans.

LOLTUN SECRET VAULT

Like the good old days of Simon Says, you have to follow the sequence of presses to be rewarded with an extra life. Pointers that lead to these vaults are found throughout the levels, but can you beat the system?



CEIBA JUNGLE

The first leg of Harry Jr's voyage into the depths of the Mayan jungle leads him through the rain forest. Although nothing particularly nasty is waiting to catch him unawares, in theory this is your chance to test out your new found talents. Perfect the control system before you venture into the heights of the trees.



JUMP TO THE BEAT

Spy those objects temptingly dangling from the bushes and trees? What do you mean you can't reach them? All that's necessary is to jump, lash out with the whip, and watch them fall to the floor. Simpler than something very simple indeed.



XIBALBA FALLS



The raging falls offer no mercy to explorers foolish enough to slip from the path. Don't take too many risks when attempting to uncover hidden routes, and keep an eye out for the pesky giant-sized mosquitoes who will try to knock you to your doom. They don't give up easily, so nip their advances in the bud.

RUBBER SPRINGS

The bungee vine, indigenous to the Mayan lands, provides a handy route to the right of the area. But it's also a good idea to investigate on foot in search of goodies, especially above the first bungee where an extra life is up for grabs.



WARP OUT

Mysterious forces are at work within the Mayan realm. In centuries gone by, the ancient civilisation established a number of warp portals to allow them to cross danger easily. Luckily some of them contain enough power to transport Harry — this warp carrying him to the other side of the level. Once on the other side you will find a rope hidden inside a trunk. Climb up the rope to the top where you will find two bungee vines. Take the right-hand vine to a decidedly rickety-looking bridge to collect a pepper that will allow you to jump up higher than usual and collect an extra life.

TAZAMUL MINES

The biggest level in the entire game can be completed quickly thanks to the two mine carts. But a top tip for all of you real explorers is to forget the carts and seek out goodies on foot.

FINE CART

From the very start a top bonus is available by pushing the cart to the right. After you've pushed it past the scaffolding, use it as a platform to jump up and to the left. In the secret room a boomerang is for the taking. Now push the cart further to the right to leap onto the rope dangling above the precipice.

LIFE STYLE

By looking behind the scenes, Harry will find hidden ropes to the seemingly out of reach bonuses. An extra life is waiting to be found by climbing the rope after the first massive bat ambush. At the top jump to the right and along the platform that backs onto the webbed door.

BONUS WARP

You've probably discovered that the barrels explode when smashed, costing energy Harry Jnr can ill-afford to lose. At this point in the mines section, fire a sling shot at the barrel to create an explosion and open the path to the Loltun secret vault.



WEBBED DOOR

It's pretty obvious that the web-covered door is a dead-end. Try as you may to walk through it, the only way to remove the offending web is to sling shot the devil. It takes a while, but goes in the end.





OUCH! THAT CARTS

Before you even encounter the cart mania at the end of the level, a switch must be flicked to open the trap door. This is found over to the left of the obscured area. Now prepare yourself for one of the toughest challenges in the game — the runaway carts. Timing is essential, but above all you must keep jumping to avoid a head-on collision. At the end of the level, leap onto the platform and head through the door.





LOST CITY OF COPAN

A maze of platforms and locked doors, the Lost City should be tackled at a steady pace. Beware of the repeated skeleton attacks, and remember they are only vulnerable when reduced to skulls.

TONGUE ACTION

Your first encounter with the wall-mounted tongues, always remember you can stay bouncing on one for as long as you want. Always check out all of the possibilities before heading on high via the tongues, though, as it's a long way down.

CRAWLER

By holding DOWN and B, Harry can get on his hands and knees and crawl through small gaps. At the top of the level, before you head over to the right, check out the gap in the masonry for a heart and some gems.



SWITCHED ON

For the first time in the game Harry faces locked doors, which can only be opened by triggering a switch, Keep your eyes peeled for odd lumps of blocks in the walls. To activate the switch, give it a shove or shoot it with your slingshot.



SPIKES AHOY

You've pretty much reached the end of your tether by this point quite literally! On face value it appears that there is no way forward, but if you climb the rope and avoid the spikes, a switch is visible. Hit the switch and prepare to meet the terror of the stone jaguars.



STRAIGHT FOR THE JAGUAR

Defeating Zakelua's two stone jaguars is no mean feat and will require persistence and timing. When fighting the first jaguar use your boomerang to cause loads of damage, and use sling stones when the other rises from his slumber. The confrontation with both of the concrete critters is purely a question of avoiding their attacks by jumping out of trouble.Eventually one of the jaguars will take a rest, and from this point, finishing both of them off should be a piece of cake.







COPAN TEMPLE

Like something off the set of an Indiana Jones movie, the temple is filled to the brim with bizarre obstacles and creepy-crawlies. A lot of ducking and swiping is required to clear the way of tarantulas and plague-infested rats, not to mention the temple spirits that lurk in the deepest shadows.

TRAMPOLINE TRAUMA

There's nothing complicated about the two spider's webs at the top of the first section. The trick really is to bounce off the first and avoid ricocheting from the second. When you are successfully over the other side, simply walk behind the wall to hit the switch to open the bonus door previously locked.





GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

Yikes, check out those pendulous fireballs! A keen sense of judgment is necessary for the crossing for the bonus heart, but more importantly you should look to the left-hand side mid-way down the rope for the secret room hiding the switch to open the door.



LOOK LIVELY

The steps and flames section has to be covered at a rapid pace to maintain the necessary momentum to carry you across the gaps. Before you reach the final stretch to the exit, look for a lonely canister, and whip it for an extra life.



CALENDAR WHEEL

All it takes is one touch from the deadly all-crushing wheel to put an end to your days as a rescuer. There is, however, an easy way to beat the flattening — as soon as you've released the final lever, run to the left through the doorway, and jump at the edge of the stairs. This will take you safely to the exit.



LAKAMUL RAINFOREST

Through the dank and humid depths of the rainforest Harry will have to have his wits about him. Although not one of the largest levels in the game, the choice is yours as to whether you take the high road through the tree tops, or the beaten track along the wild boar highways on the ground. Whatever you do, watch out for the tar pits as one false move spells disaster.

SNAKES AND LADDERS

Not the first time Harry Jnr's encountered the snake ropes, but this time round the idea is to sling shot them from a distance before attempting climbage. Don't dawdle on the way up, as once the snakes wakes, you will tumble into the pit 'o' doom.



CANNON

The most unlikely firearms, these tree stumps will fire our boy high into the relative safety of the branches if he happens to fall to the ground.



HOME RUN

The exit from the rainforest is in the top right corner of the area. To exit you must jump to the left slightly so you can get onto the death slide for a sharp retreat.



YAXCHILAN LAGOON

Quite possibly the trickiest level in the game, the Lagoon needs patience at a slow pace. The easiest way to complete the first section of the level is to head left as soon as you've reached the water-



side. By climbing up the vine, you can head along the top of the first part and collect an extra life in the process.





SNAP HAPPY

Although they may appear vicious, the 'gators are in fact a source of help in these dire times. Never jump on a yawning croc — unless you want to end up as lunch, that is. But while you are on the beat's head, you can remain there for as long as you like. Unfortunately this doesn't apply to the moving variety.





RUNAWAY MINECART

Again Harry has to brave the dark recesses of the mines, but this time on an abandoned mine cart moving at about 70 mph.

RED LIGHT STOP, GREEN LIGHT GO!

You can chop and change as much as you want on the three tracks, but the best ploy is to stick to one track. As soon as the light turns red you're going to have to jump. Don't delay or it's curtains for Harry.





VAPOUR GHOSTS

These minions of hell are simple enough to dodge, but when combined with the carts, they prove to be troublesome. Don't forget about the pause button, if things get too much — take some time out.





TIKAL RUINS

Finally you're getting closer to your journey's end. This level contains more of the usual skeletons and challenge, but with a cool head nothing can stop you. In particular watch out for the attack of the killer eagles and their swooping formations.

SINK OR SWIM

A new kind of obstacle, the quick sand pit is not as deadly as its tar cousin. If you fall in, keep tapping jump as quickly as possible to stay above water. Make sure you deal with the eagles before entering the pit, as there's no shooting when caught up.



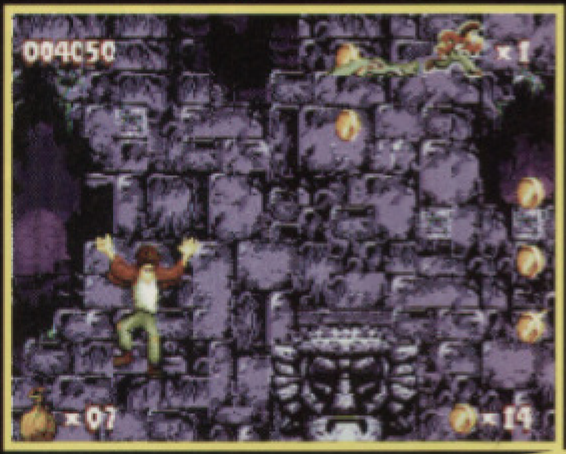


NO WAY OUT

It may look as if there's no way out, but if you return to the rope that lead you down here, you'll notice about half way down a small door switch is hanging about. Position yourself carefully and fire away to release the lock.

TONGUES OUT

The tongues and coins section, at first tough, is simple enough when you learn to follow the lines of coins. Each line leads to another tongue spring, so by following the path you can make your way across to safety.



JAGUAR MAN

Hopefully you've benefited from all of the power-ups in the course of the level, because you're going to need them to face the Jaguar Man. His attacks are swift and powerful, but if you maintain the rhythm of firing off a couple of attacks, jumping over his morphing swipe, and then turning round to hit him again, it shouldn't be too difficult to wave farewell to him.

Not for the faint-hearted, the temple is the only domain that stands between you and the final battle with the warrior spirit Zakelua. A combination of all the trickiest sections of previous levels, you should already be familiar with most of the challenges. The quickest route through the level is to follow the route pointed by the save points.



SMART START

Before you can even get under way, Harry must solve the puzzle of the trap door. To get upstairs hide behind the pillar in the centre of the room and jump, this will launch you high into the sky to face the rotating spike balls. Hit the switch on the left first and then to the right for the switch to open the door below.





TAR FOR THE RIDE

Careful timing on the moving slates is all important. If you ride all the way to the right, an extra life is available. But getting back onto the path is not so easy. When facing the spike balls, be vigilant, they can knock you off and into the pit.





WHEELIE, WHEELIE HARD

The return of the Mayan calendar wheel, the only option is to run as fast as your legs will carry you, but watch out for the gap at the end of the platform.

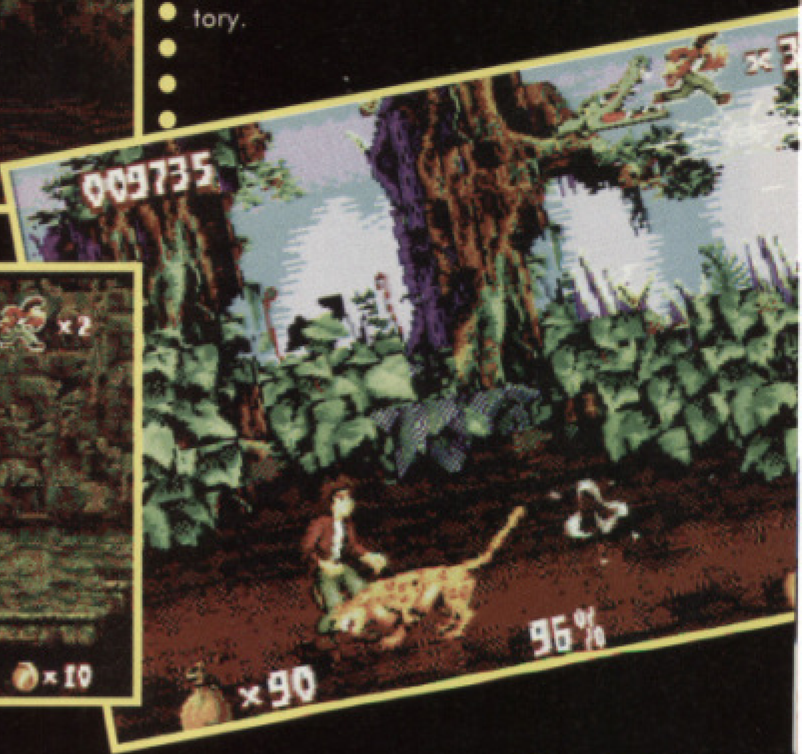


WARRIOR SPIRIT

This is what you've travelled all the way for — to face the warrior spirit. You will be here for quite some time, so be prepared for quite a fight. The best form of attack is a couple of good shots to the head, and to keep your distance to shake off his tractor beam. When he jumps into the air, run under his feet, but only grab the heart if really necessary. Repeat the process until his falls to his doom and free dad from his clutches. Hooray! You're home free! C'mon daddy let's go home...

A2600 PITFALL

Yes the original version does exist in the latest version. To access the game enter DOWN, A 26 times, and DOWN on the Pitfall title screen. Enjoy one of weirdest in-game time warps back through gaming history.



True



1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	TBA
BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: TWO
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
N/A

ORIGIN
Beam Software render one of the blockbuster movies of last year — Arnie's big comeback True Lies. Chaos Engine type gameplay.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Kill! Kill! Kill! Find weapons and complete each of the mission directives.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has had two lives. The first was spent under a bench press, pulling funny faces and popping veins out of his neck. Then he decided to get another. This second, more enjoyable life involved champagne, limos, big movies. But there have been downs and wells as ups.

Take Terminator as his first big break. This was solidly backed up by Predator a sweaty jungle affair, taking him into the big budget league. Red Heat, where he cleverly plays a Russian (by not saying anything and having a cob on) also reinforced his appeal. Then he makes Kindergarten Cop (hum...), Twins (Gnnnh!) and The Last Action Hero. Stop!

It looked like someone had led Arnie off the golden path. His appeal is not based on him being big and cuddle — just big. He doesn't pack in the punters for being some gentle giant — just for being a giant. And thankfully this was worked out in time for True Lies, last year's hit that reversed the trend. A stupendous effects movie, in many ways a ridiculous movie, it didn't do Arnie any harm, and the tie-in won't do Acclaim any damage either, despite the game trailing the film just a tad

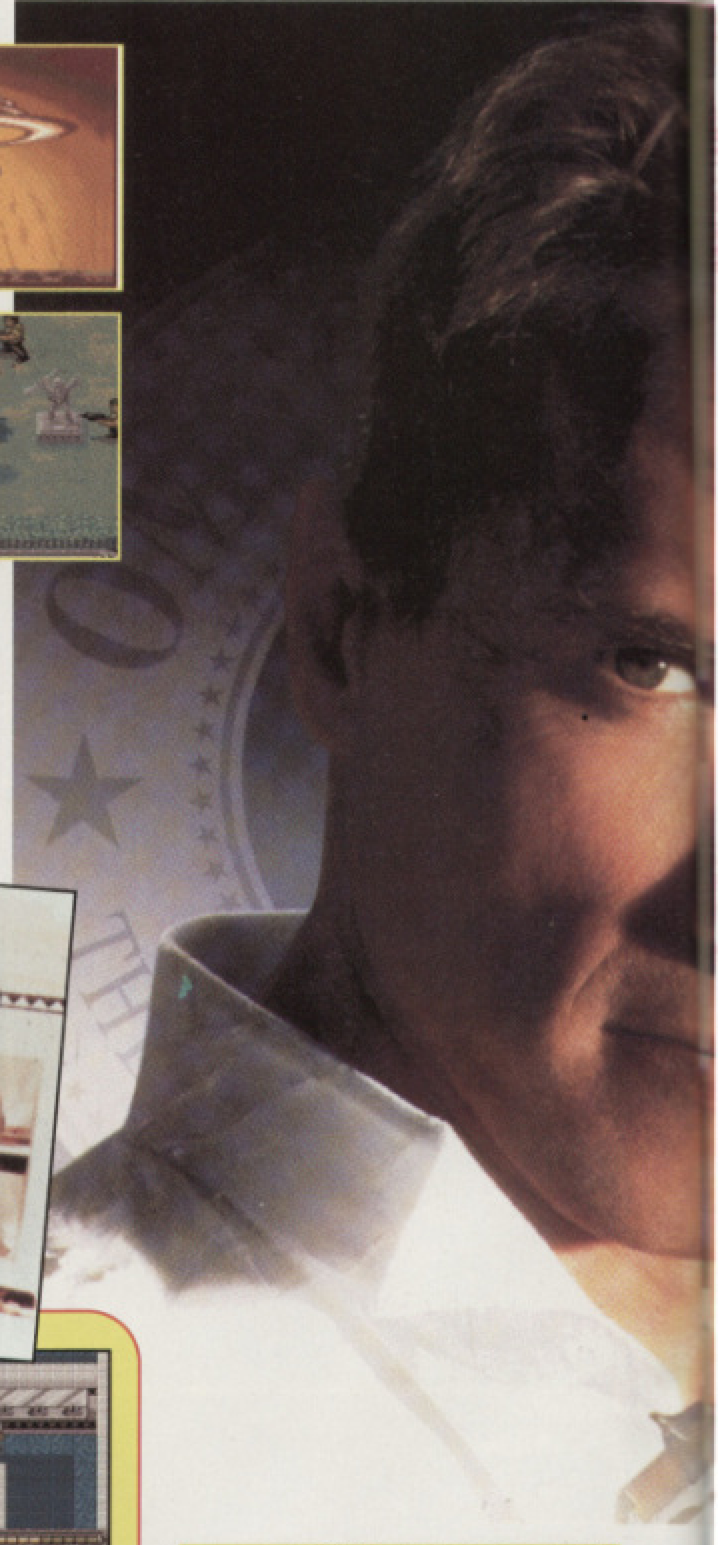




▲ (TOP) *Steve the morning after a heavy curry sesh.*

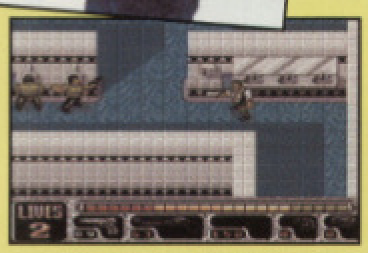


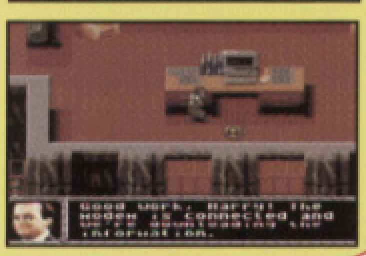


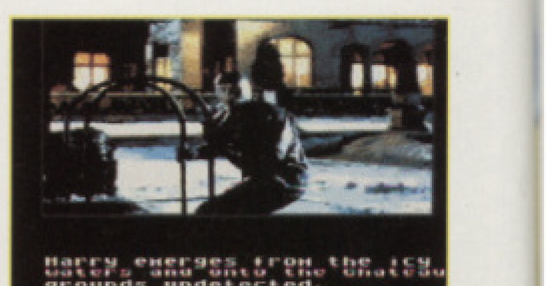


LOSING THE PLOT

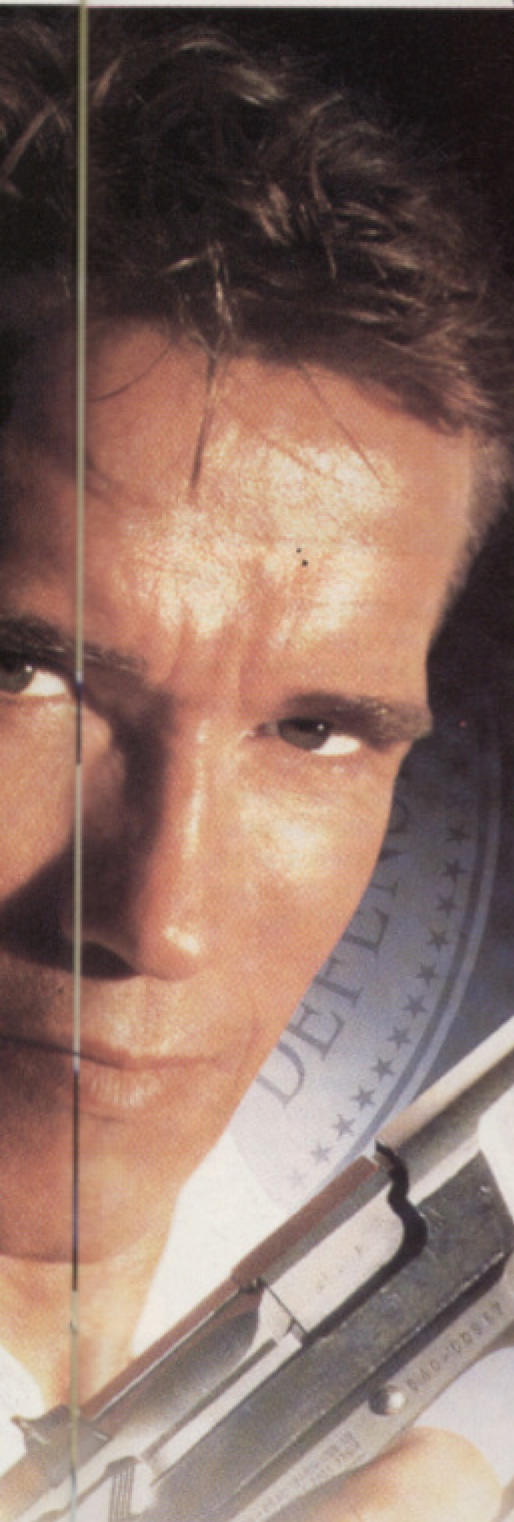
So what happens? Special Agent Harry Tasker is on the trail of Middle Eastern terrorist Aziz and his cohorts, and is sent around the world to gain information on their activities. Each level works into the film storyline with a digitised still from the film, and an instruction from Harry's Secret Service handler. The twist in the story comes with Harry's job being a secret from his wife and family.





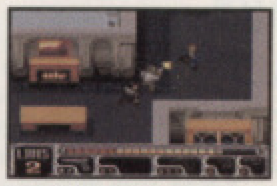


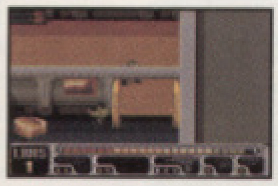
Lies













LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

One novel aspect of True Lies is that not all the characters milling around the levels should be shot. Each stage is crammed with innocent civilians who often get in the line of fire. Naturally, killing them is a sackable offence! But you are allowed to make two genuine mistakes before the CEO decided your aim is more trouble than you are worth. The animated civilians are quite amusing in certain situations — some of them will cower under newspapers at the sound of gunfire, other keen photographers will try to get snaps. As the game progresses, it's often hard to tell the innocents and terrorists apart.



▲ *John Major's country residence features in the 'kill the government' subgame. Another 'true lie' snort.*







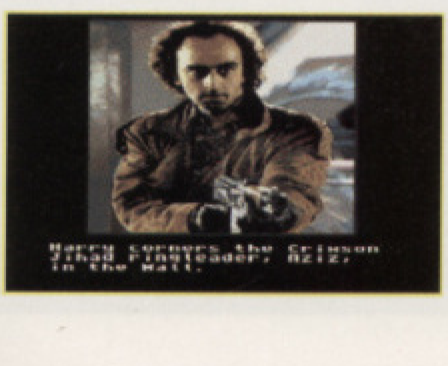
▲ *This may look like the plan of a mental hospital, but it is, in fact the first level.*

BLOOD AND GORE

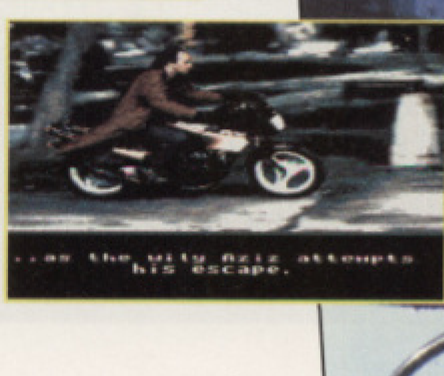
True Lies enhances Acclaim's gore reputation, with blood graphically spilt. Every time you kill an enemy they collapse in a pool of their own plasma before doing the customary sprite shuffle off this mortal coil.











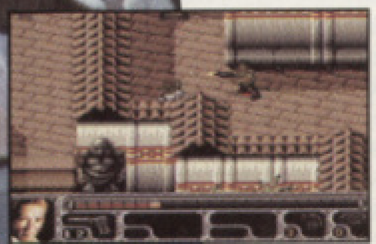
True Lies



YOB CULTURE

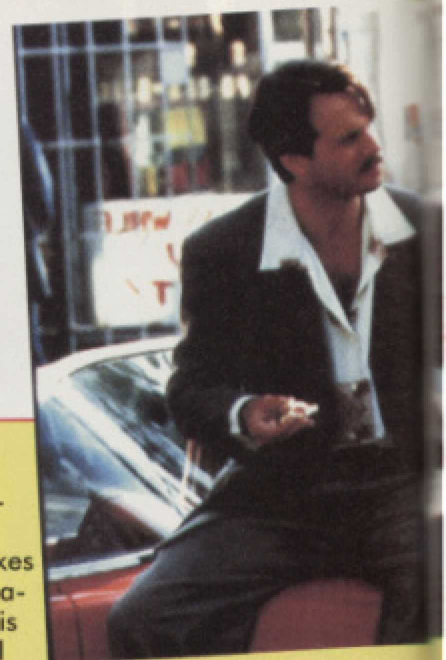
A variety of Aziz's thugs populate the overhead-viewed play areas. As you progress their weaponry increases in power, and their intelligence improves to boot. The be-suited monkeys of the first level who walk into your line of fire give way in time to snipers who hide in bushes and mad machine-gunners.







▼ *Games action ahoy in this action packed screen shot*



MAD ABOUT HARRY

We give you a technicolour selection of the scenes from the film converted into cunning plan view levels. The area the game covers is really quite large.

IT'S MY PARTY AND I'LL CRY IF I 3WANT TO

Harry gate-crashes the chateau in order to download vital information from a computer housed upstairs. After locating the data, there's little time to evade the attention of security.

SKI SUNDAE

On the slopes surrounding the chateau, Harry takes to his heels as measures to prevent his escape go into full swing. It's a catch-22 scenario: tree-thick areas protect him from the attention of skiers and ski-mobiles, but slow him down, allowing the helicopter a better aim.

SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

A surveillance operation reveals Aziz to be hiding out in a shopping mall (Rumbelows, perchance?). Here the presence of old biddies doing their Saturday shopping makes armed exchanges very risky.

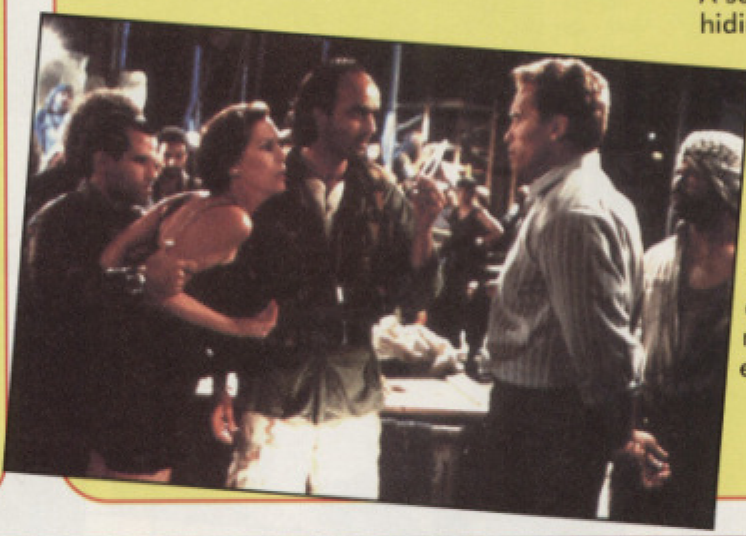
FLUSHING OPERATION

A toilet scene set to become infamous in video game lore. First, take out the guys taking aim at the urinals, then gasp in amazement as an endless stream of terrorists arrive from the same cubicles, eager to do battle.

E=MC2

You'll be expected to solve a few not-too-taxing puzzles as you go, to allow progress. Commonly, areas of the level need gate keys or passcards to allow access to further areas, so an element of back-tracking exists.







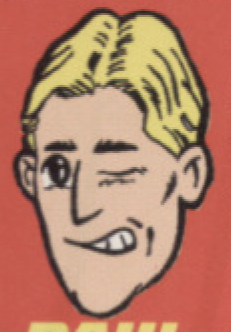




PARKLIFE
After Harry has taken to a horse, rampaged through a hotel and fallen from a huge building, we get to the really exciting part — chasing Aziz through the park. Less innocents here beyond a few tramps and Tai Chai pupils!

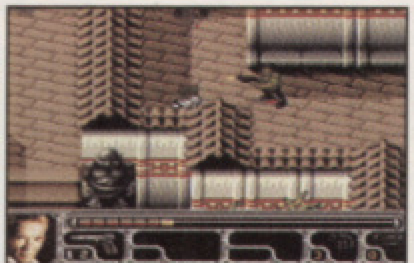


COMMENT

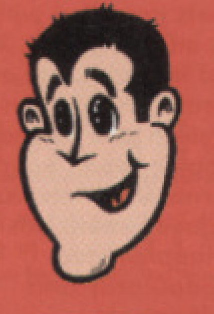


PAUL

Games like the Chaos Engine and Smash TV have proved that blasters are also compatible with the overhead format. So it is refreshing to see a film license as big as True Lies has been given the same treatment. If at first the graphics appear a bit on the drab side, the gameplay does eventually shine through after a couple of minutes. What's more the artificial intelligence of the enemy characters proves to be more sophisticated then its predecessors. There's nothing hugely mindblowing about True Lies as a game (unlike the excessive FX of the film), but it is a nice break from the usual crop of platform shoot 'em ups.

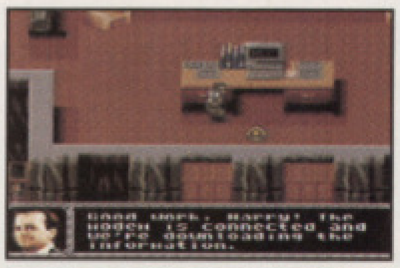


COMMENT



GUS

The overhead blaster is not a design used often for Megadrive games, despite usually working well, so True Lies is welcome in that respect. It should also get the thumbs up from sickos and gun fanatics who can see the blood spurting out of their unfortunate victims. All this pussy-footing over violence has been thrown out with True Lies where the body-count is truly extraordinary. But despite being challenging and generally fun to play, the game's main failing is its lack of spectacle and excitement when compared to the movie. Okay, the film had James Cameron, $50m, and the best effects possible, but even so, Beam Software have chosen to skip some unforgettable sequences like the horse ride, which would have made great gameplay. Coupled with the bland graphics, it's easy to miss the humour of the animated civilians, and the novelty of keeping them out of the line of fire. True Lies is nowhere near the top of my shopping list...but I'm still playing it.





GRAPHICS 71
▲The animations of the innocent characters is quite funny.
▼The levels are flat and the graphics generally uninspiring.

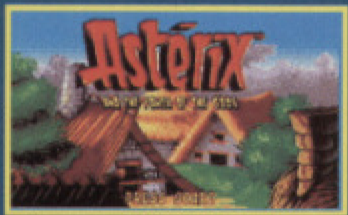
SOUND 76
▲Gruesome sounds of doom and 'sound' FX.
▼ The imposing voice of Arnie is conspicuously absent.

PLAYABILITY 81
▲ Plays better than it looks. Nice feel to the weapons and some tricky enemy tactics.
▼ Pretty much the same throughout and slightly too slow.

LASTABILITY 75
▲Large levels, and the password system is geared to lengthening the game challenge.
▼Lack of variety is the major threat.

VFM 73
▼ So much of the film is missing, it often seems a tenuous link to True Lies.

OVERALLR- 79
Plenty of murder and carnage, with a real sense of tension. But as a representation of True Lies on the Megadrive it's less successful.



1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY SEGA

RELEASE APRIL

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOYPAD
CONTINUES: 1
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM/HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
8,000

ORIGIN
Licensed from the continental comic book characters. Core's second Asterix platformer for the Megadrive.

GAME BREAKDOWN

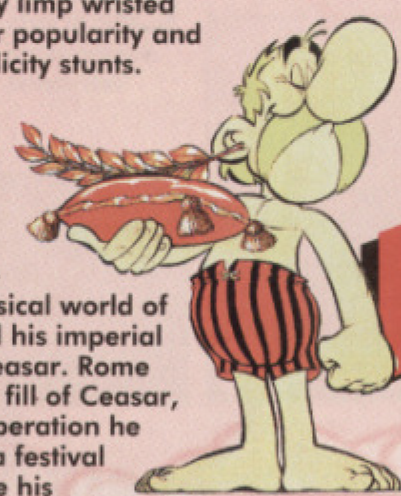


GAME AIM
Recover the shield of Vercingetorix from Rome, the heart of Ceasar's power. Solve many puzzles along the way.

Ast

THE POWER OF THE GODS

Picture a once great Empire in decay. At one time rich, now its capital's streets are filled with beggars and the impoverished. At one time proud of its order and efficiency, now its roads crumble and collapse. Once stern and feared, its northern peoples are in open revolt. And its government — oh woe! The slap of firm government has been replaced by limp wristed appeals for popularity and cheap publicity stunts.



But enough of the current situation in Britain. Let's look back to the quirky classical world of Asterix and his imperial nemesis Ceasar. Rome has had its fill of Ceasar, and in desperation he organises a festival to celebrate his past victories over the continents unfortunate tribes ('Victory in Europe Day', perhaps?). Except, one vital trophy has been lost — the shield of Gallic warlord Vercingetorix.

The relic found its way back to Gaul, and ended up in Asterix's village. Roman legionnaires were dispatched to bring it back to Rome, which they did under cover of darkness. Outraged, Asterix and best mate Obelix set out to restore Gaul's dignity and humiliate Ceasar.



▼ *The Obelix curry-powered cannonball attack.*



AN UNLIKELY STORY

Asterix books have always been a delight for their off-the-wall ideas and non-conformist approach, as well as genuine humour. The short introductory strip for Power of the Gods is excellent in capturing the spirit and the quality of artwork found in the printed form.





THE ESSENTIAL CLASSICS

In choosing music for the game, the programmers have plundered the repertoire of Classical music. It's quite an unusual path to take, but isn't as much of a turn off as it sounds. The 20-odd tunes come from the likes of Rimsky Korsakov, Prokofiev and Boccherini. Eh? But, worry ye not, most are well-known classics you'll recognise instantly from TV ads.

COMMENT

GUS

This could so easily have been overlooked considering its snooze-worthy predecessor, but this second Asterix game is really a little gem. Hiding behind some drawn out early levels is a feast of puzzle platforming, hundreds of lovely locations to seek out and more than enough action provided by the duo's latin bashing antics. The graphics are fab throughout, crucially capturing the essence of the cartoon, as does the short cartoon demo. But Power of the Gods is more than cosmetically attractive. It's well thought out, it's challenging and it's clever. Puzzles in one place affect the outcome in other locations, and cunning little arrangements like the blocks in the Rajah's palace test the mind as well as the fingers, unlike so many platform games. Resist the impulse to pass over Power of the Gods for something flashier, as it is one to really get into.



▲ ***'My mate Flink visited here,' said Obelix...***

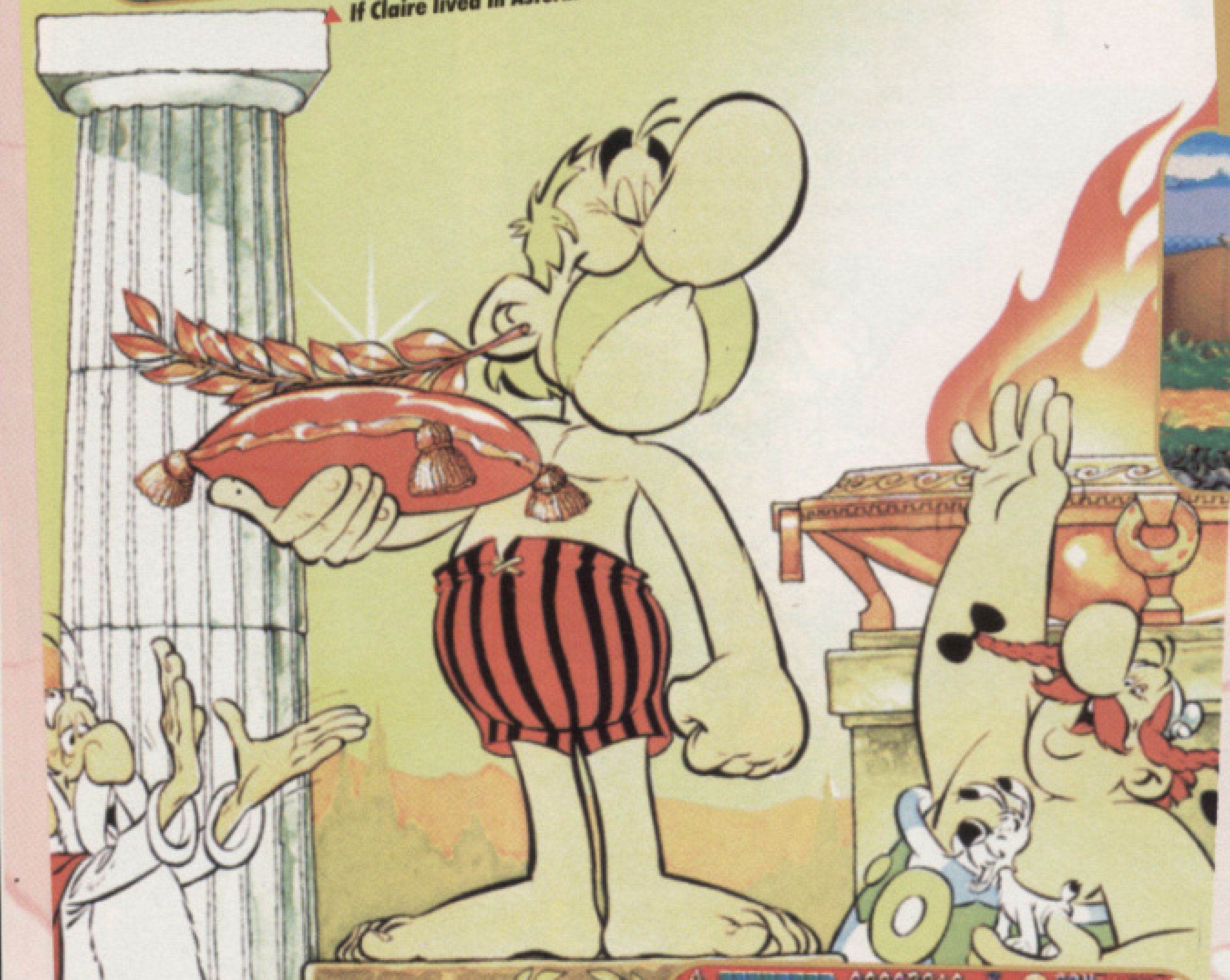








If Claire lived in Asterix times she'd be called Cackyknix, you know...



TRIBE OF CANTONA

Nobody needs to be told that the French enjoy a bit of a rumble — eh, Eric? And Asterix gets stuck into those pasta-scoffing Roman soldiers before you can say 'it's an early bath for you, Cantona me laddo'. Asterix and Obelix have special fighting moves, though both share a technique of grabbing their opponents and performing acts of extreme comic violence:

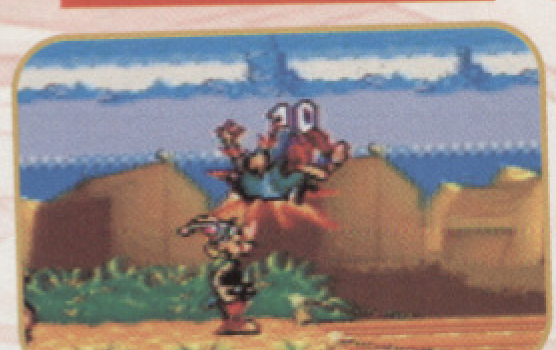




FLIP FLOP



PILE DRIVER



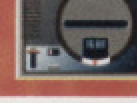
FLING

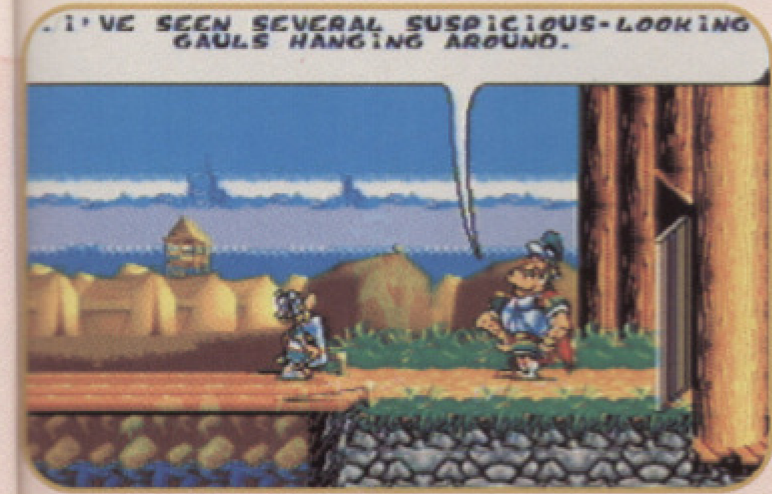
LEVER BROTHERS

Ropes, levers, pulleys — the state of the art in hi-tech for the year 40BC — play a recurrent part in the puzzle-based gameplay. The effects of switch-pulling are manifold; from opening doors to dropping balls! Pulleys operate restart points and ropes do all sorts of other things. The puzzles link the stages together, releasing a flaming boulder in the Gaulish forest has a devasating effect in the Roman encampments miles away. Just how is for you to discover.







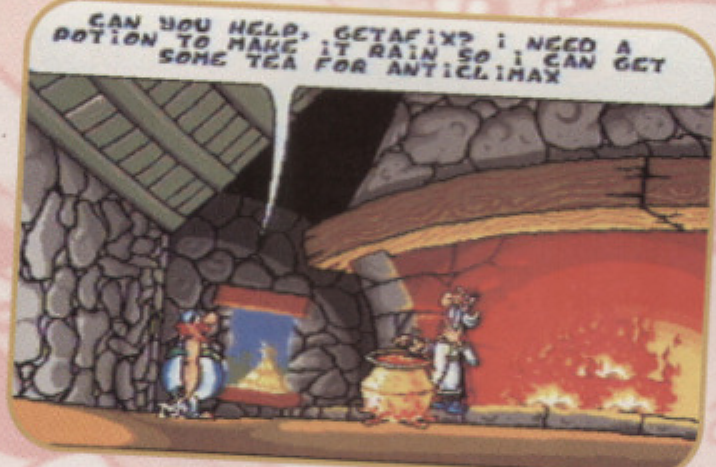


▼ *We predict he will have a meeting with the word 'Paf!'*

ROMAN ROADS

Asterix's world is connected by a series of linking roads. The characters have freedom to an extent to explore areas as they wish. Leaving a level by the marked exits brings them to the main map. The map is split into sections, meaning some areas are blocked until much later in the game. In the earliest example, the heroes are trapped in France until a Fakir offers to fly them to find tea in India.









PROPELLER SPIN

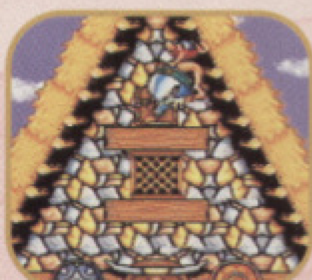


RAPID SLAP



FLING

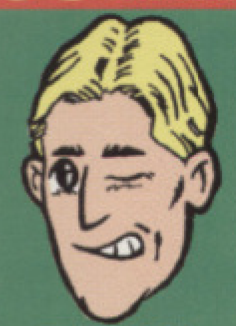






▲ *You'll never believe who I had on the back of my rug the other day...*

COMMENT



PAUL

Asterix fans can finally breath a huge sigh of relief, that finally justice has been served in his latest console escapade. Whereas before the previous offerings were nothing to write home about, Power of the Gods proves to be a highly successful mixture of game styles and technical know-how. The character sprites are faithful to the original comic strips, being both bright, bold, and colourful. But above all, the combination of carefully constructed levels full of platform action and RPG search to succeed investigation, sets this title apart from all others. A word of warning though, Power of the Gods is only for those tough enough to face a real challenge. Are you ready?

GRAPHICS

90

▲Classic renderings of the cartoon. All manner of varied pallettes, objects and funny animations. Visually engaging at every point.

SOUND

81

▲The idea of classical music is a novel one. Some tunes suit their locations well.
▼Many of the arrangements use unconvincing instrument sounds.

PLAYABILITY

91

▲ The game is one of the least linear you will encounter. Plenty of fights.
▼Maybe a little slow compared Sonic-style capers.

LASTABILITY

88

▲ One continue, no passwords, tons of levels, unforgiving gameplay. This is the way we like 'em. Plenty of longevity.

VFM

89

▲ You feel the 16MEG of memory has been spent on gameplay, and Asterix weighs in as a substantial game at a reasonable price.

OVERALL

90

Meaty as a roasted wild boar, gorge yourself on the platform decadence that is Asterix: Power of the Gods: Ave Core! Ave Sega!



1-2 PLAYERS

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE IMPORT

BY SEGA

RELEASE OUT NOW

OPTIONS

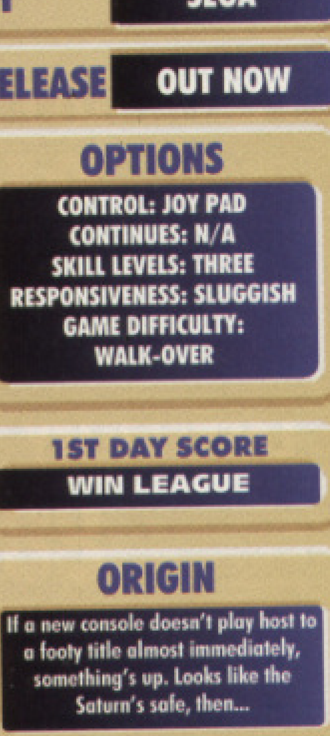
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: THREE
RESPONSIVENESS: SLUGGISH
GAME DIFFICULTY: WALK-OVER

1ST DAY SCORE
WIN LEAGUE

ORIGIN

If a new console doesn't play host to a footy title almost immediately, something's up. Looks like the Saturn's safe, then...

GAME BREAKDOWN



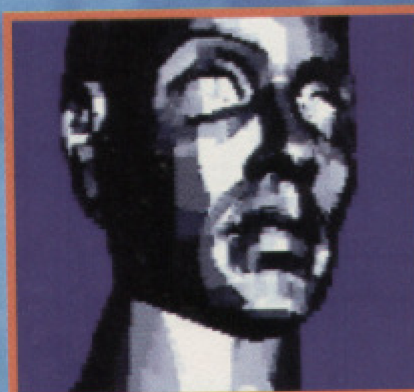
GAME AIM

Kicka da football inna da goal. As Roberto Baggio might say. When he's not missing penalties, that is.

VICTORY GOAL

Victory Goal marks the first footy game to land in the Saturn's CD drive and, as can be expected of a machine with its processing power, features all manner of zoom modes, rotational effects and digitised interludes.

Using the current J-League teams in its line-up, the Japanese equivalents to Cantona (ie. someone who acts like Bruce Lee to opposing fans), Giggs and... er, Gary Lineker are all revealed in their digitised glory, as one or two players step up to control Grampus Eight or one of the other premiere teams. Pretty much all the usual footy rules apply, and Victory Goal's off-screen ref oversees fouls, off-sides and red and yellow cards. What we want to know, though, is what's the Japanese for 'the referee is of illegitimate stock...'



▲ *A double-glzazier from Streatham.*



WHO'S ZOOMING WHO?

With the Saturn boasting stunning graphical processing power, it was always likely Victory Goal would boast rotational effects and clever panning similar to that of 3DO FIFA. During play the action in viewed from a camera located above and behind the southern-most goal. Using the two left and right buttons on the top of the joypad, the action can be viewed from one of three zoom modes. With the exception of an isometric perspective, though, these are the only views on offer and an opportunity to emulate the 3DO game's 'Ball Cam' and 'Shoulder Cam' are sadly lacking. Still, goal-scoring heroes will no doubt be chuffed to learn their moments of glory are replayed from three views just to make victory that much sweeter!

ONE-NIL TO THE GRAMPUS EIGHT...

Japanese soccer differs from the rest of the world in that if a match ends in a draw, they decide the outcome in a rather unusual way. Whereas the European teams play twenty minutes of extra time to settle it, or a rematch followed by more extra time and a decisive penalty shoot-out, the Japanese opt for a 'sudden death' play-off. This means that extra time is played until a goal is scored. Thus, if two teams are of equal skill, a match could very well go on for hours!

BALL CONTROL

The Saturn's A, B, and C buttons effect a number of kicks and headers, with the A button tonking the ball, B used to pass to the nearest player and C changing control to the player nearest the ball. However, as with FIFA on the 3DO, these moves change depending on the height of the ball and the proximity of the player. For instance, if the A button is depressed when the ball is in the air, the player currently under control will try for a header or a bicycle kick, depending on the height of the ball when the button is pressed. The goalkeepers, though, are a different kettle of fish. Whilst the computer-controlled option is advised for newcomers, full control is also on offer with the player switching control to the 'keeper whenever the Z button is pressed. Be warned, though, timing is essential or you'll just assume control in time to see the ball sail into the net.



▲ 'Off you go you bad sportsman, it's an early bath for you.'





▲ 'Then he leapt across the barrier and kicked me. Like, everyone else was doing it'.



COMMENT



STEVE

I love footy games, me. Having graduated from J-League to Sensi, FIFA and Konami's brilliant International Superstar Soccer, I was eagerly awaiting this first Saturn effort. After all, FIFA on the 3DO added superb camera tricks to the original game, so surely the Saturn game would be even better? Nope. Victory Goal is soccer at its most basic. Passing and kicking are about the only moves on offer with everything else under the computer's jurisdiction, and this makes for a tedious game of weaving and passing until you get to the corner of the opposition's box where a diagonal shot goes in virtually every time. Control over the 'keepers is minimal and poorly devised, and very little skill is needed when effecting a tackle — simply hammer the B button until you gain possession! Whilst these are all faults levied at the 3DO game, at least EA's programmers tried to divert the player with the addition of the said camera angles. Victory Goal offers a very stilted zoom mode which only confuses play, and the only other option is to view it from an isometric point. This has all the hallmarks of another rushed Saturn effort, and footy fans are well advised to wait for Konami's Superstar Soccer. It won't appear for a year, but it's better than this pap.







OOH, AAH, LINEKAAAAAAH!

The import version of Victory Goal is endorsed by the Japanese J-League, and offers the player control over any one of the twelve teams within it. Anyone familiar with the Megadrive import version of J-League Soccer (an old office fave) will already be familiar with the likes of Grampus, Jef United and Sanfrecce, but Victory Goal takes its attention to detail a step further with the addition of digitised info on each teams' players. This includes assorted stats regarding their control and shooting skills, and allows the player to add a very slight managerial bent by substituting and rearranging the teams.

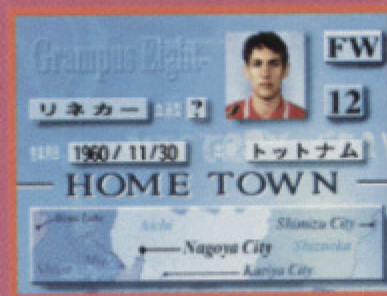


▲ *Arsenal's new signing — ex-Gladiator Shadow!*











COMMENT



This is a bit of a nightmare. Rumours that Victory Goal was a bit crud had circulated since the New Year, but I hardly thought it would be this inept. The scrolling and scaling are good, but there are no exciting camera angles to enjoy. Play is ultra basic — you cannot even manipulate the Goalie around the box. The CPU plays appallingly, but even human opposition doesn't create any excitement. There are 16 (count 'em!) teams, which makes me wonder just how insular the Japanese are. No, no, no.







GRAPHICS — 79

▲ The sprites are detailed, and look good when at their largest scale. Similarly, the score-boards boast neat rendered pics and interludes.

SOUND — 83

▲ You can select the crowd chants to suit the teams playing, and a variety of tunes play throughout the match.
▼ Unfortunately, the music is the worst thing this side of Boyzone.

PLAYABILITY — 65

▲ Easy enough to pick up.
▼ But no real skill is involved thanks to the sim-plistic controls, and guaranteed scoring method..

LASTABILITY — 47

▼ Very little. Play soon becomes repet-itive, and the diffi-culty level is far too low. More intelligent opponents would have helped.

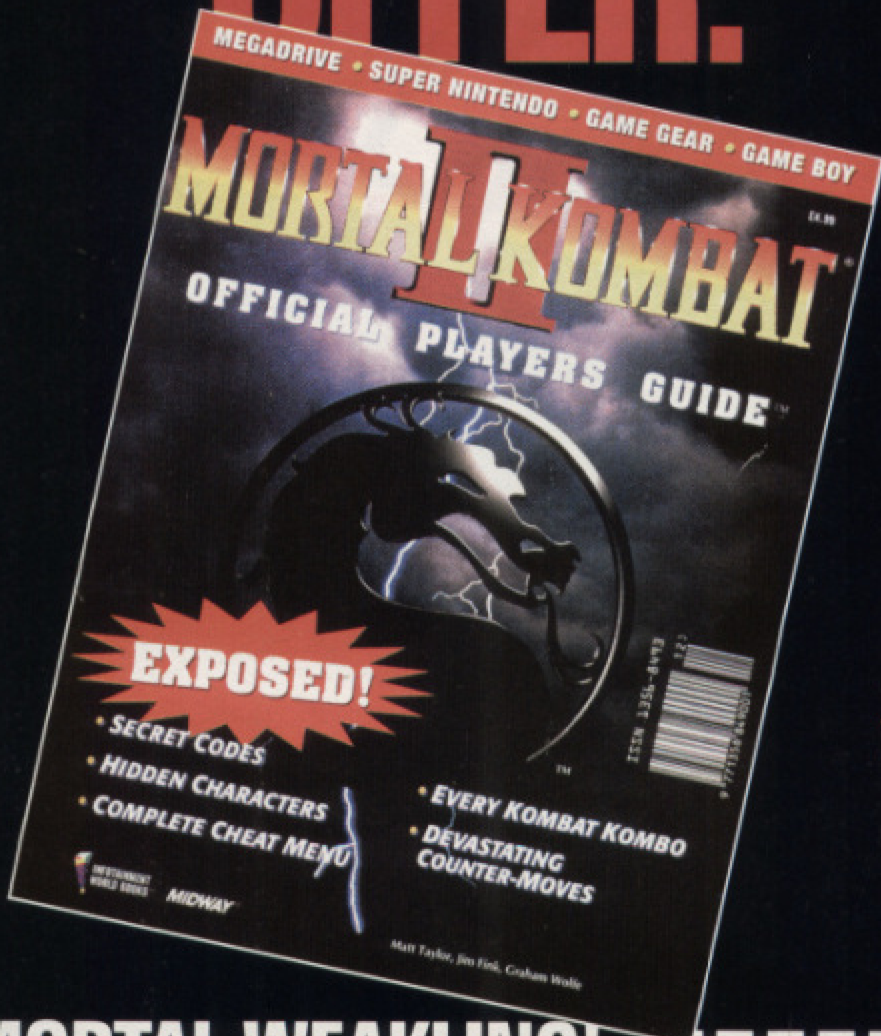
VFM — 44

▼ The import price is greatly inflated, making this a com-plete non-event. Save your money for the Cantona 'Karate For Self Defence' video!

OVERALL — 55

Like missing an open goal. This is a completely wasted opportunity which suffers from minimal gameplay and a lack of lasting appeal. A foul of the first order.

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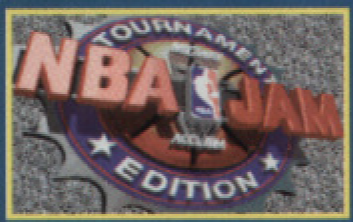
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1-4 PLAYERS | **24 MEG**

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE	TBA
BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	FEBRUARY

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS: 5
RESPONSIVENESS: EXCELLENT
GAME DIFFICULTY:
EASY

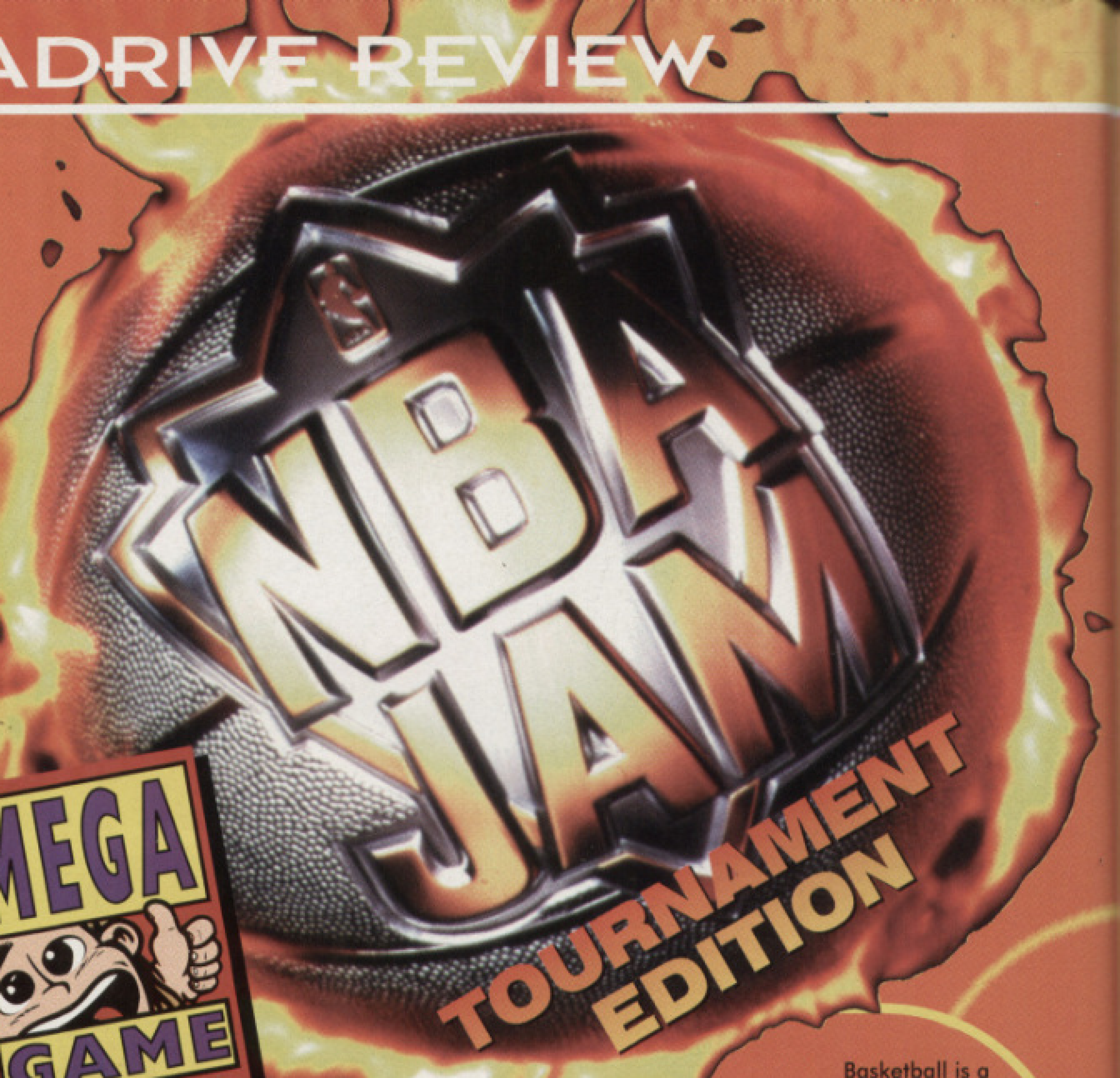
1ST DAY SCORE
WIN 50-44

ORIGIN
Converted from Midway's Tournament Edition coin-op, following the success of NBA Jam in 1994.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Put the ball through your opponents basket as often as possible within the time-limit.



MEGA GAME

Basketball is a game with a simple objective, and NBA Jam TE is basketball executed simply. Just get the ball through the hoop in one of three ways.

RIMMING

The eternal problem for big companies is how to make their best products even better. Sometimes, bright ideas like calling them 'Power', 'Future' or just 'new and improved' don't wash (so to speak). Suddenly you've got the nation's housewives posting their ripped-up Y-fronts to you in protest, and a major PR headache.

So Acclaim must have been extra cautious when putting together the Tournament Edition of NBA Jam. The previous game was one of their big successes of last year, doing the running away back in cold February when other video games were selling like Magnums in Finland. The basis for the update is Midway's late 1994 arcade Tournament Edition, which added some features to, whilst retaining the choice action of the original NBA Jam. An extra 8MEGs have been apportioned to include all these for the Megadrive conversion.

LAY-UP

A simple and sure method of scoring. Player shoots after entering the rectangular scoring zone, by jumping and bouncing ball off backboard, for two points.



THREE POINT

Ambitious and accurate scorers may attempt a basket from beyond the three point-line which forms a semi-circle around the basket area, by throwing from a standing position. The reward is three point.



SLAM DUNK

Or simply 'dunk'. Scoring the same as a lay-up, dunks are performed by shooting with the turbo button when in position. A spectacular aerobatic scoring move follows.





COMMENT



Great, but let's not get carried away. There's some talk of this being leagues beyond NBA Jam. Tournament Edition is better, but not so much better. What Acclaim have done, quite sensibly, is make more of the 'bonus' parts of NBA Jam that everyone liked, like the Juice Mode, and convert the coin-op as faithfully as possible. The result is a sure-footed, fast and slick basketball game that cements its position as No.1 in that field. But it is hard to detect 8MEGs worth of improvement in here — almost half the original game. I'd be cheesed off just to pay for a large amount of cheesy 'hidden characters', which is not really the point of the whole game. I was sometimes a bit perturbed with the ease with which the CPU pulled out three-pointers (strangely whenever it was under pressure) which confirms that NBA Jam TE is best played with human opponents. Sure to rekindle a bit of Jam mania, and deserves to.

MAN FROM DEL MONTE

The first NBA Jam had a hidden 'Juice' Mode which enabled you to play at 'Pro-Plus-snorted-through-a-twenty-quid-note' speed. The follow-up now supports this popular cheat as a fully fledged game option. There are four different levels of Juice Mode, from fast to mental.

STRIKE IT LUCKY

Newly featured in this Edition are the hot spots. Toggled on/off from the special features menu, they offer a chance to score some unbelievable dunks with the minimum of effort. Numbered hot spots appear at random on the court, lasting a short time. Shooting from on top of one accesses one of several highly theatrical scoring sequences.

PARKHURST 33

Oh what fun we had, last year, finding the ten faces secreted within NBA Jam. Acclaim logically think that sticking a massive 33 in this time will make for even more amusement, but there you are. Get to work locating this little lot, and we'll show you how next issue.

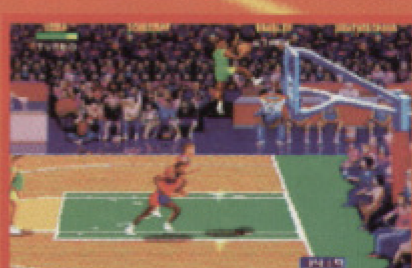


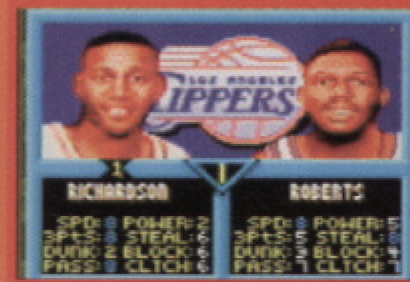








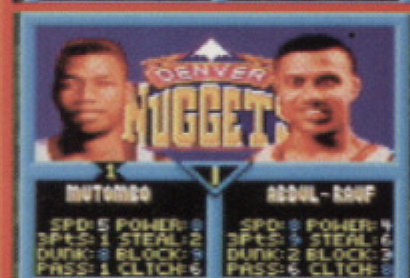


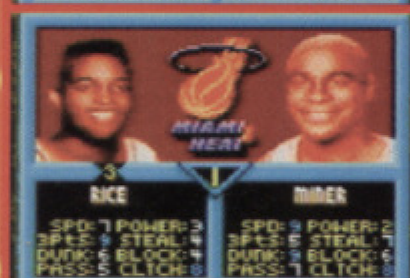


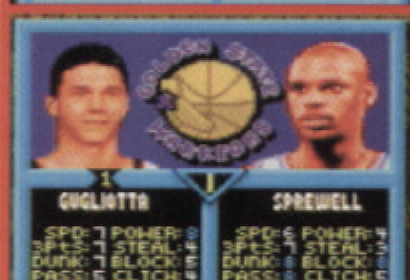


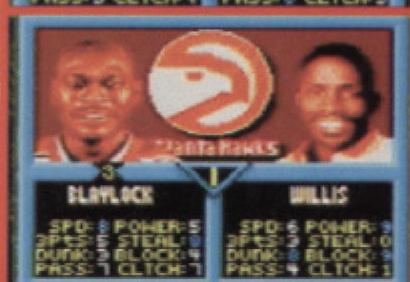


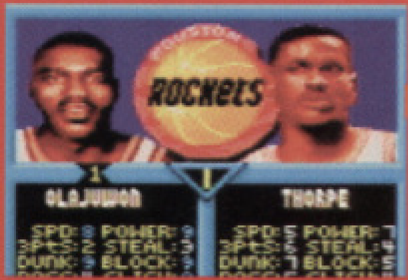


























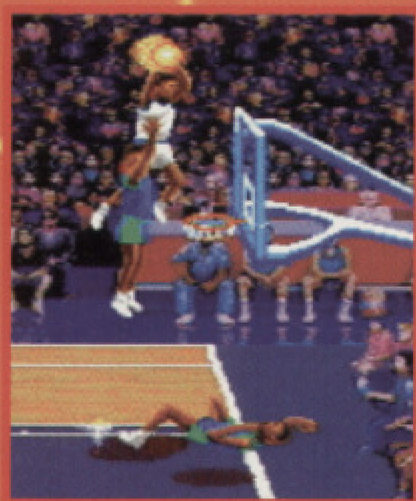
SINK THAT SUB

Teams have been augmented from the couplings of NBA Jam to feature three, four or more of the members of each conference side. The upshot of this is the ability to shuffle your team members should their performance disappoint. Also, the games now incorporate an element of fatigue. The longer an individual is played for, especially on turbo, the higher their injury rating goes. This makes them progressively less able on court. Sensible subbing is the best way around it

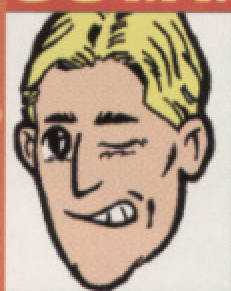


COACH COLLISION

At points between game quarters, you'll find an array of colourful coaching tips (well, the text does change shade). These run from bloody obvious basic controls to genuinely useful ideas of strategy and play. Even more instructive is the player breakdown, showing who is doing what in any particular playoff.



COMMENT



PAUL

You can't help but love this game. The original was a fine example of totally fab gameplay, but the sequel really pushes out the boat when it comes down to all of the options, special moves, and hidden characters. What's more the graphics have been vastly improved to provide hooping fun at a furious pace. But as Gus rightly points out, nothing has radically changed from the original. Basically if you are already the proud owner of the first NBA Jam, I'd think twice about forking out. If not, Tournament Edition is a must buy!

ORGY OF FUN

As before, NBA Jam allows up to four players to take part in any combination of two-on-two, with the computer filling in any unplayed positions. Playing solo, you can toggle between computer assistance and total control.



GRAPHICS

91

▲ Courts crispier than a box of salty popcorn, with splendid animation to boot. Superb scrolling to keep everything centred.

SOUND

88

▲ Improved sound, with even more inane commentary to annoy your friends with.

▼ Some unconvincing gaps in the FX: groans but no cheers.

PLAYABILITY

91

▲ Immediate, groovy pick up and play gameplay stylee, and suited to small groups with big sherbets.

▼ Not a vast amount of depth.

LASTABILITY

86

▲ Will be attracting your attention just as long as the coin-op attracts two-bob bits.

▼ Not so vastly different as to be an all-new thang.

VFM

87

▼ Penalised for having a high-quality predecessor in NBA Jam, available for less.

OVERALL

90

The sequel still scorches, but doesn't offer that many surprising new features. Tournament Edition is the best yet, though.



1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE TBA

BY CORE DESIGN

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: FIVE
SKILL LEVELS: THREE
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
END OF SEWERS

ORIGIN
Sort of like Battlecorps but viewed from the outside. And using sprites. Sort of.

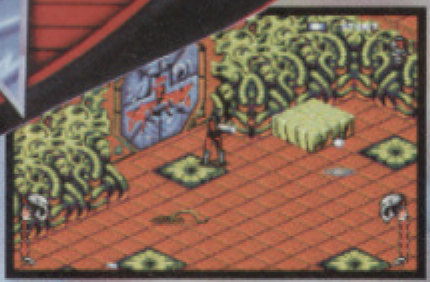
GAME BREAKDOWN

ORIGINALITY	REFLEXES	CHALLENGE	ACTION	STRATEGY
3/5	4/5	5/5	4/5	2/5

GAME AIM
Blast a path through the alien menace to the final boss, Krochnagara. Or whatever he's called.

SKELETON KREW



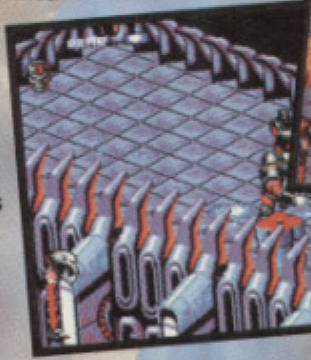


Fate can be cruel. When given the name Shirley Crabtree, young Shirl had no choice but to stuff his face with pies until he became a a big wobbly wrestler and adopted the name Big Daddy. Conversely, when Damien Icouldaveyereasy was revealed to be a quiet chap, he duly changed his name to Russell Grant. What I'm saying is, basically, a dodgy name can determine a person's fate.

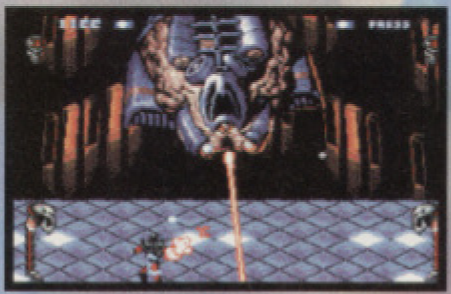
Take the bad guy in Core's newie, Skeleton Krew. With a name like Moribund Kadaver he was bound to turn into an evil genetic scientist prone to engineering hideous mutants for his own use. I mean, what were his parents thinking of? Needless to say, Kadaver's plans for mutant domination have got to be nipped in the bud, but rather than changing his name legally, Core are sending in the three gun-toting members of the titular Skeleton Krew to flush him out of his six-level domain.

KREW KUT

Skeleton crew is best described as a mixture of Gauntlet, Battlecorp and Viewpoint. It takes place over six scrolling isometric stages, with the player and their optional mate guiding one of three cyborgs through squads of enemy droids and gadgets. Starting the game, three characters are proffered, offering the player a choice of fast but weak hero, an armoured but slow one, and a 'pretty average actually' one. The six stages re spread across four worlds, and begins within an Earth city before moving on to the sewers, and on to Mars and its mines, the dumping ground on Venus, and Kadaver's mutant base. Each area is crawling with a mixture of mutant targets and bosses, and the basic aim is to blast a way through them whilst simultaneously collecting coins and extra lives along the way. Simple, really.









COME AND HAVE A GO

Skeleton Krew's method for multi-directional blasting is akin to that of Battlecorp. Each of the warrior machines is armed with an unlimited supply of mines and lasers, and switching between the two is effected using the A button. As with big clunky tanks, the sprites fire in the direction they are facing, yet using the A and C buttons in conjunction with the B button makes their top half rotate in the required direction, allowing the player to take aim and fire. This versatility also spreads to the device's motive units which in addition to moving in the customary eight directions, can be made to jump (well, skip) by tapping the C button.

COMMENT



GUS

The first few plays of this seduced me into thinking I was in the presence of a classic in the making. Sadly, Skeleton Krew ends up being merely above average because of a few basic faults. It looks great, and the fast-moving isometric layouts are something entirely new. But the repetitive levels really need some variety or depth to give you a boost once in a while. Instead, But although it gets more frenetic, nothing significantly new comes along. However, the engine itself has distinct possibilities.





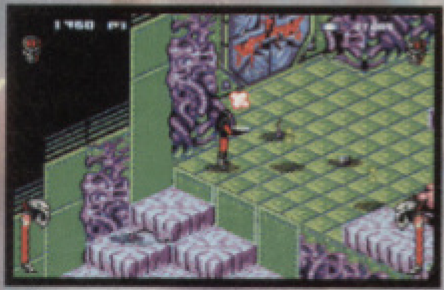


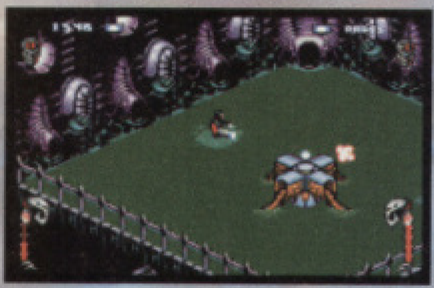


▲ *Tonight's 'Stars in their eyes' contestants.*

MONEY FOR NOTHING

Money makes the world go around, the world go around, the world go around as they say, and it certainly enriches the Skeleton Krew's lives. Dotted around the play area are numerous piles of coins and notes which come in three colours. The lowest denomination are blue which aren't worth the paper they're printed on, but the red and white piles are far more valuable. 10,000 NuBucks (as they're known) garner and extra life, but 1-UP icons can also be found around the place.







▲ *Charming little residence you have here. Love the decor.*



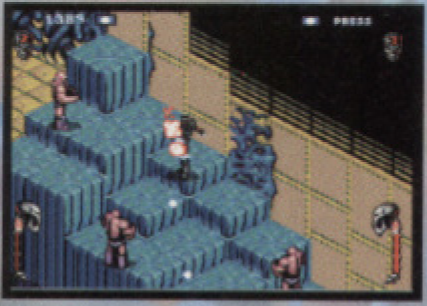
▲ *Attack of the cotton wool zonbie.*

COMMENT



STEVE

Skeleton Krew tries a new slant on the blasting theme by incorporating a novel control system and the rarely used isometric perspective. In terms of initial appeal this work perfectly, with the three control buttons used to superb effect as the player wanders around busy and intricately-drawn backdrops. However, the robots themselves are a little cumbersome,even the fastest. The number of aliens are often excessive making successful manoeuvring and accurate firing almost impossible, and loss of life seemingly inevitable. If it wasn't for this overhard difficulty setting I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this. The rotational control method allows for complete control, and all praise to the programmers for achieving this, but even the most adept player is going to find the continual barrage of alien fire a little trying: A real pity, as the basic idea and game is sound enough. It's a little like painting the Mona Lisa and adding a beard to her.



▲ *Lets get out of here!*

GRAPHICS — 83

▲ Incredibly detailed backdrops and loads of attractive aliens — perhaps a little too many at times!
▼ The sacrifice of colour for detail is painfully apparent.

SOUND — 91

▲ Nice introductory music and the game effects are everything a trigger-happy so-and-so could want. Typical Core polish.

PLAYABILITY — 84

▲ Control is a delight to use, and the levels are large and stacked with hidden stages.
▼ Too intense at times making it impossible to avoid death.

LASTABILITY — 80

▲ Six larger levels, and Core have certainly made sure it's tough.
▼ Whilst we appreciate games shouldn't be a walkover, this takes it too far..

VFM — 83

▼ An average price for a very tough blast. It does offer a challenge, but is only recommended if you are extremely tolerant of no-win situations.

OVERALL — 83

Superb in every aspect, but progress is restricted by an overhard difficulty level which makes it hard to progress. Frustrating, and only recommended for those with plenty of hair to pull out.

ATP TENN



1-4 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE TBA

BY SEGA

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS: ONE
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
TOURNAMENT SEMIS

ORIGIN

A revamped version of Sega's old Wimbledon Tennis, incorporating new presentational features.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

In each match, force the opponent to hit the ball into the net or out of court. Win successive tournaments and improve your ranking.

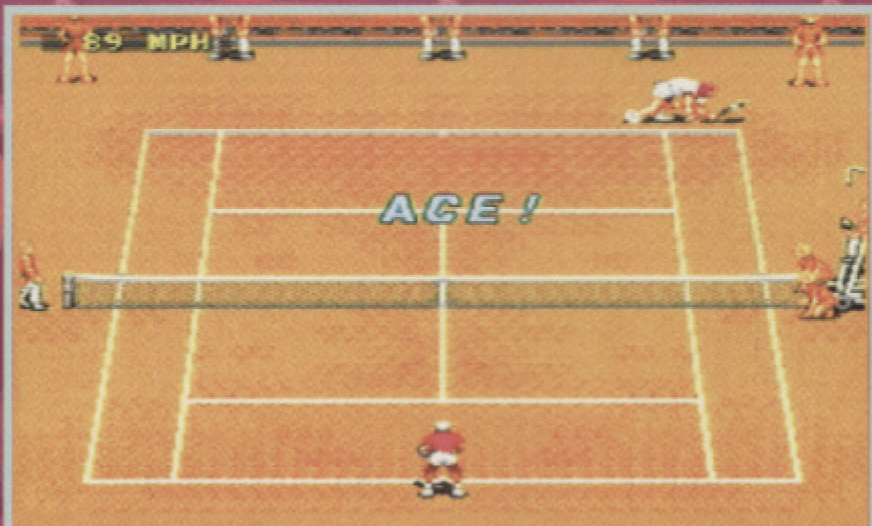
What the good game of tennis really needs to spice it up is a bit of hooliganism. Imagine newspaper reports of tennis thugs rioting at Wimbledon. Picture accounts of people in Farah slacks fighting running battles with private security guards whilst ripping up rows of wooden seats, all because Jeremy Bates loses a set.

It's a chilling possibility, because people only riot in this country when they're losing. With tennis we'd be in a perpetual state of law-breaking. However, the situation is not like that at all. Tennis spectators sit and clap politely, as they do in Sega's new ATP Tennis Tour. Neither the farting sounds as the ball bounces, nor the dalek-voiced umpire can raise them to a frothy, lawless fury. Composed, genteel, bums-firmly-on-seats and fingers-on-lips. God, isn't tennis boring?

SPIT AND POLISH

At its heart, ATP is Wimbledon Tennis — not the freshest tennis simulation around, it debuted on the Megadrive some two years ago. The game engine is basically sound, with small player sprites and the action displayed in a no-nonsense 2-D format.





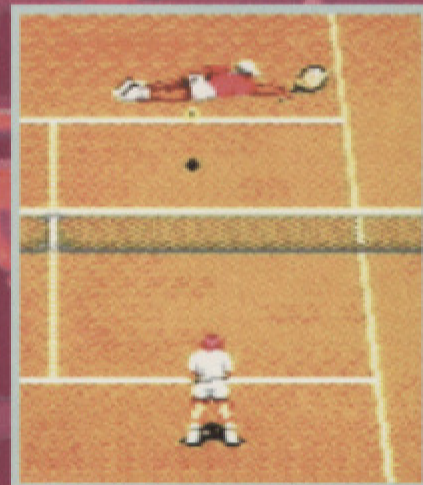
▲ The screen is prone to exuberant outbursts like the above.

"VE KNOW ABOUT YOU"

ATP deals comprehensively with its players. The 40 standard characters have biographical details of age, nationality and playing characteristics. A digitised pic of each is provided. The ability roster is the most important part of player information. Skills in aspects of power, accuracy and speed are allocated points. There are four blank spaces in the field for your own players, which you have freedom to customise.



▲ Your handy pooper scooper proves its worth on clay.



▲ It's all too mcuh for some bat-wielders.

SHOT IN THE ARM

There are no complaints about the range of shots. Serving is easy, and comes in three levels of speed (shown by a serve speedometer). Lobs, topspin and dropshots are achievable. Lobs are particularly fascinating as the ball sort of bloats as it rises to give a sense of extreme height. Coo!

COMMENT



STEVE

Revamping their old Wimbledon game may have seen like a smart move if Sega had their eye on EA. But Wimbledon was no Madden's and doesn't benefit from being 'put down' for a few years. No this is no chateauneuf that matures into a glorious vintage. It's a wonky old Hirondelle that's been stuck in a fancy new bottle. The graphics are unimpressive and all the extended options are merely icing on a cake. With Sampras on the scene, there was really no need.

NIS TOUR

SPEAK AND SPELL

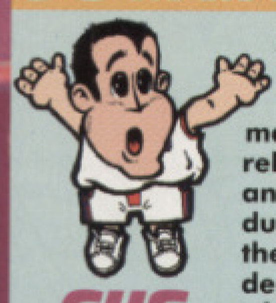
Extra memory has gone towards the umpire's contribution. This is the first tennis game we can remember when the umpire pronounces the player's surnames rather than just 'player one' or 'server'. Sadly, this proves such an effort for the poor man that all his utterings sound like a Dalek getting an enema.



THE DAILY GLOBE

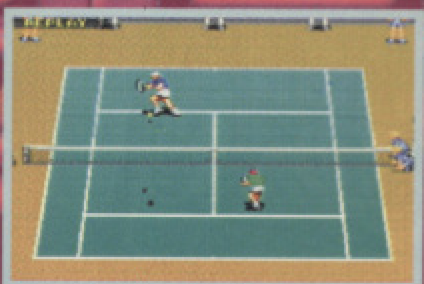
Two tournaments are offered. The 'Global' one seems to spend a lot of time in America. But then they are the world (they are the children). The US events have sponsors and loads of prize-money. The Senior event, on the other hand, is for a selection of celebrity fogeys. Play Rod Laver and Rod Newcombe and watch our for coronaries.

COMMENT



GUS

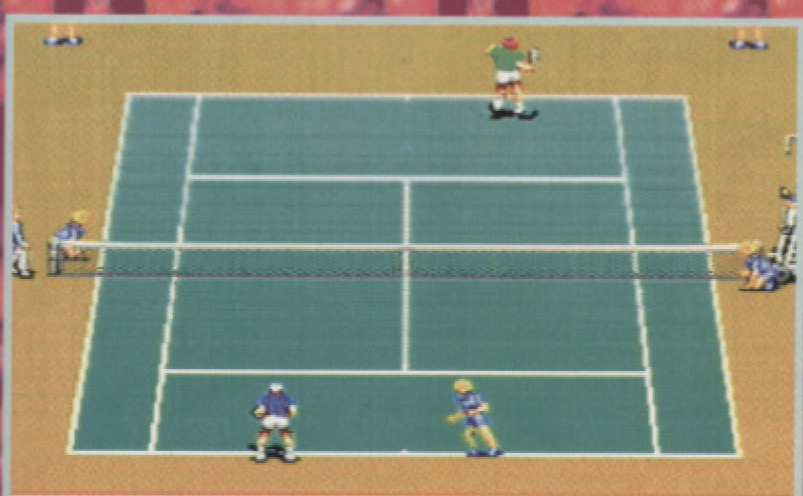
A dull and unremarkable release for an equally dull part of the calender. Anyone who releases a tennis game in miserable March hasn't a great deal of enthusiasm for the sport. Just to look at, ATP is depressingly like its ancient progenitor Wimbledon. The sprites are pretty weedy and the backdrops dull as dishwater but it's okay to play, especially at the higher lunatic speed settings. With all the stats malarkey, I do think this serves a section of the gaming population, but Sampras is infinitely more fun.

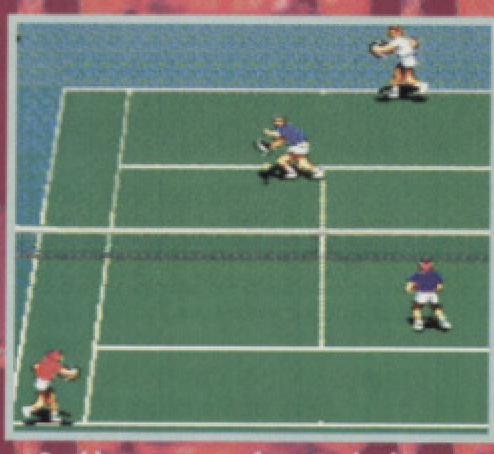












▲ Doubles games use far more barley water and plastic cups.

GRAPHICS — 65

▲ Crisp, clearly defined courts and players, with adequate animation.
▼ A distinct lack of variety or visual thrills and spills.

SOUND — 67

▲ An impressive range of sampled speech. A good 'thwack' noise.
The bouncing sounds flatulent and the umpire has a problem.

PLAYABILITY — 78

▲ Easy to work out the controls, the sprites are responsive, there's enough player options.

LASTABILITY — 73

▲ The backing to the game is as comprehensive as it gets.
▼ Not as challenging as some other Megadrive tennis titles.

VFM — 70

▼ It's not really on to charge for an old game scrubbed down with peripheral attractions.

OVERALL — 76

ATP Tour sits firmly in the second rank of tennis games, but we're not talking about a total waste of time.



1-2 PLAYERS | **4 MEG**

GAME TYPE
RACING

PRICE £24.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE APRIL

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOYPAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
WIN FIRST CUP

ORIGIN
A sequel to Sonic Drift, a previous Game Gear racer which was not released in the UK.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Beat your three opponents over six circuits, or a single human opponent in the link-up game.



▲ *Get out the way, Walrus Chops...*





▲ *Robo Sonic heads for the hills, whilst Sonic goes over the top!*

SONIC DRI

MEGA GAME

If you lived in the same street as the Sonics and the Marios, it would probably drive you barmy. First the Marios get a satellite dish in, then the Sonics appear with one. Then Tails arranges for Chez Sonic to be stone-clad, and what do you know, Luigi does the same next door. Then the Marios star in a go-karting game, and inevitably so do the Sonics. But to go one better they have two. Except, instead of the Megadrive being graced by them, the pleasure is solely that of the Game Gear.

You won't have seen Sonic Drift. Sega UK passed over it, though it did quite well in Japan. The reason Sega UK ignored it? It was a bit crud. The sequel, however, does get their seal of approval. So for the first time in recent memory, there's a good reason to excercise your game-link cable and snuggle up to your Game Gear owning friends.

CATCH MY DRIFT?

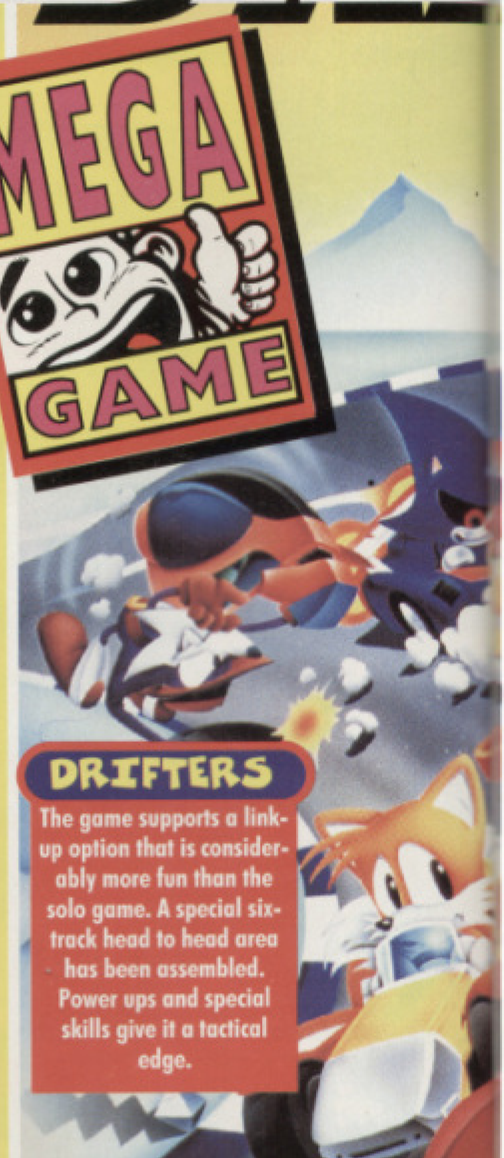
There are seven different Sonic characters to choose when playing Sonic Drift 2, each with variable attributes and skills. After you have selected, the computer picks three opponents at random from the remainder, effectively making the race different each time. You have the choice of:



DRIFT AUTOMATIC

There is a choice of manual and automatic transmission. Manual is quite tricky as you have more than just acceleration to worry about during the game. Each of the drivers has a special power with which to spike his opponents: Eggman can throw mines in front of other cars, Sonic has a speed dash, Amy leaves her opponents hopelessly lovestruck, etc. Each usage costs two rings, which are collected from the track. The powers of the other characters also come as power-ups occasionally found on the track.





DRIFTERS

The game supports a link-up option that is considerably more fun than the solo game. A special six-track head to head area has been assembled. Power ups and special skills give it a tactical edge.



COMMENT



GUS

This year will see a glut of Game Gear stuff, and if it's as good as this I'm going to be permanently connected to my handheld. Sonic Drift 2 is just great with two players, the graphics are fab and the variety of the tracks deals with any problems of repetitivity. The presentation brings the package together with umpteen combinations of match-offs between the seven characters. Even in solo mode, the playability is superb, with great response and white-knuckle finished almost every time. Simply the most desirable purchase of 1995 for Game Gear so far.

COMMENT



STEVE

I haven't enjoyed a Game Gear game as much as this for ages. Sonic Drift achieves the virtually impossible by emulating Mario Kart on the relatively humble handheld. As a one-player game, Sonic Drift is excellent thanks to its variety of courses, hazards and the intelligent computer racers, but it is in the two-player mode it starts to shine. Racing another player is great fun, and every icon and obstacle must be used to your advantage, giving the game a real addictive edge. This is a brilliant game, and the perfect reason for buying a link cable.

BANKING ON IT

The courses of the three separate cup competitions are pretty varied. Some are circuits, while others come as linear races split into stages. Some, like the Desert tracks have high banked corners, others have no track barriers, allowing the cars to fall into the abyss. The Savannah track has the neat effect of a thunderstorm in the background, blinding your view frequently with lightning flashes.





▲ *Storm clouds gathered as the demons awoke (not pictured).*

GRAPHICS

91

▲ Colourful and upbeat, with nicely defined cars. Watch as you get the thumbs up at the start.

SOUND

88

▲ Suitable music to go with the game's pacey action.
▼ No engine noise, but none expected with the Game Gear's farty low notes.

PLAYABILITY

93

▲ Very responsive, varied action and a great link-up game.

LASTABILITY

89

▲ Enough tracks and two difficulty levels to keep you going.

VFM

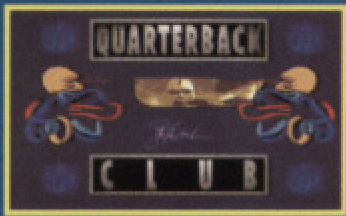
92

▲ Sega are making a special effort to undercut the going rate by some three quid.

OVERALL

92

The first Game Gear title to inspire itchy thumbs for a while. Get going and get it.



1-5 PLAYERS

24 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORTS SIM

PRICE TBA

BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:BATTERY SAVE
SKILL LEVELS:1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIM

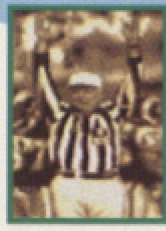
1ST DAY SCORE
WIN 9-6

ORIGIN
With the endorsement of the American NFL, this looks a lot like EA's John Madden's with the QB Challenge twist.

GAME BREAKDOWN



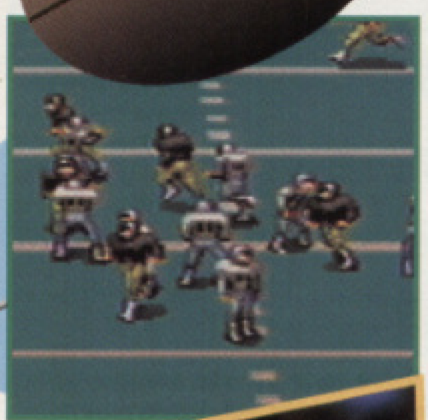
GAME AIM
Take the ball behind the opposing team's goal-line to score a touchdown. Compete with 27 other teams in each season's playoffs.



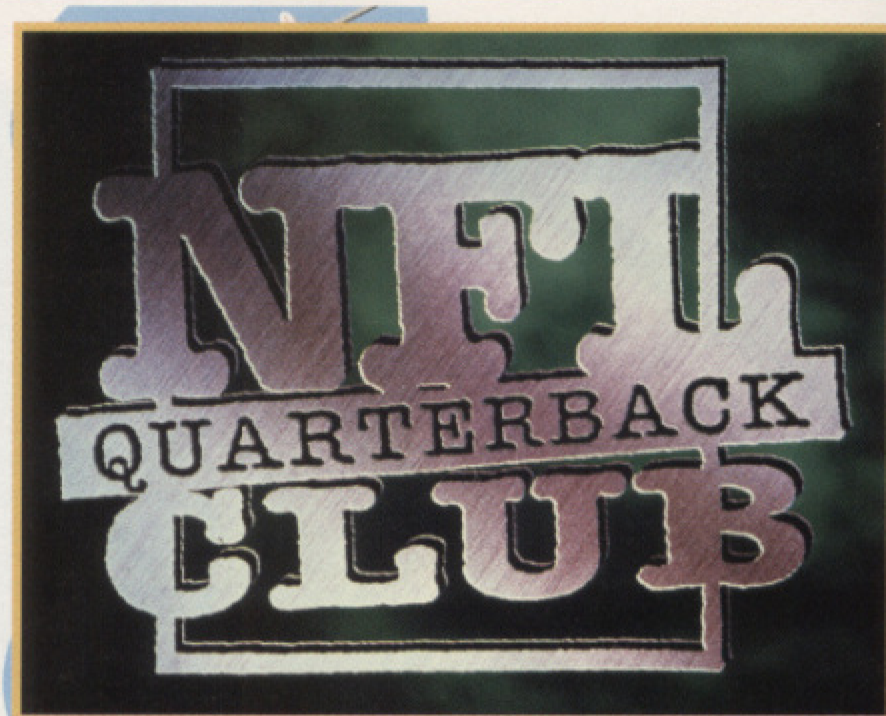
The Americans don't have a Royal Family. They don't need one, they have American Footballers. Amidst the roll call of sporting royalty, one position is King: the Quarterback. His is a pivotal role, the link between the Forwards and the Receiver, whose abilities in finding space and accurate throwing are crucial for the success of the whole side. Having a A-grade Quarterback doesn't ensure glory, but having a crap one pretty much puts the lid on the Superbowl.

Sometimes Quarterbacks can really fumble it — just look at OJ Simpson, currently undergoing 'difficulties' at the moment. Or anyone who has watched Cheers or seen Tennessee William's 'Cat on a hot tin roof' will have some appreciation of the problem of ex-footballers. But NFL Quarterback Club is a celebration of present players, including current doyenne Troy Aikmen.







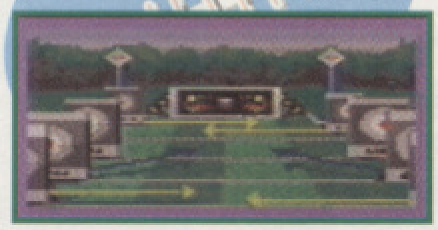


TRIAL OF CHAMPIONS

The QB challenge is an aside from the full grid-iron action. In essence, it's a mini-sports compilation testing the skills required of a quarterback in four different events. Points are awarded for each as the nineteen team quarterbacks fight for the crown. It also functions as a practice arena for the full game.

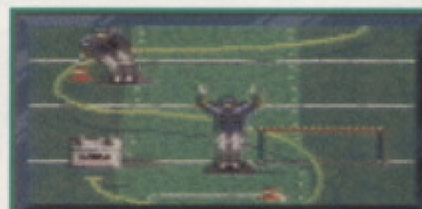
ACCURACY

This event tests the throwing skills of the quarterback with points awarded for striking either of two moving targets as they move across the field.



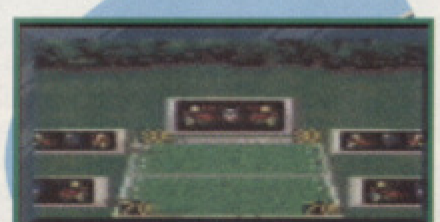
AGILITY

A two-part event set against the clock. First maneouvre a mini-assault course then hit a target. Time is added for colliding with obstacles, and deducted for good aim.



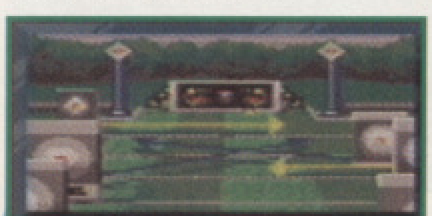
POWER

A button-basher which gauges the throwing length of the quarterback. Two attempts are given to extend the reach (shown by a cursor) within five seconds.



RECOGNITION

A melée of targets cross the field in this event, but the quarterback has to discern the active targets marked with a flag. Other targets will deduct points if hit.

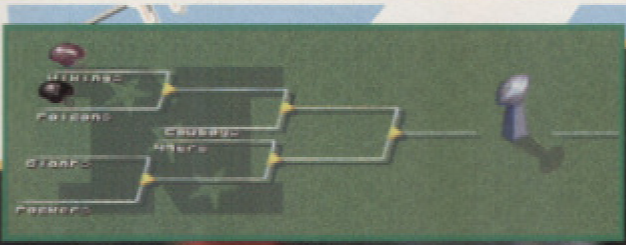


COMMENT

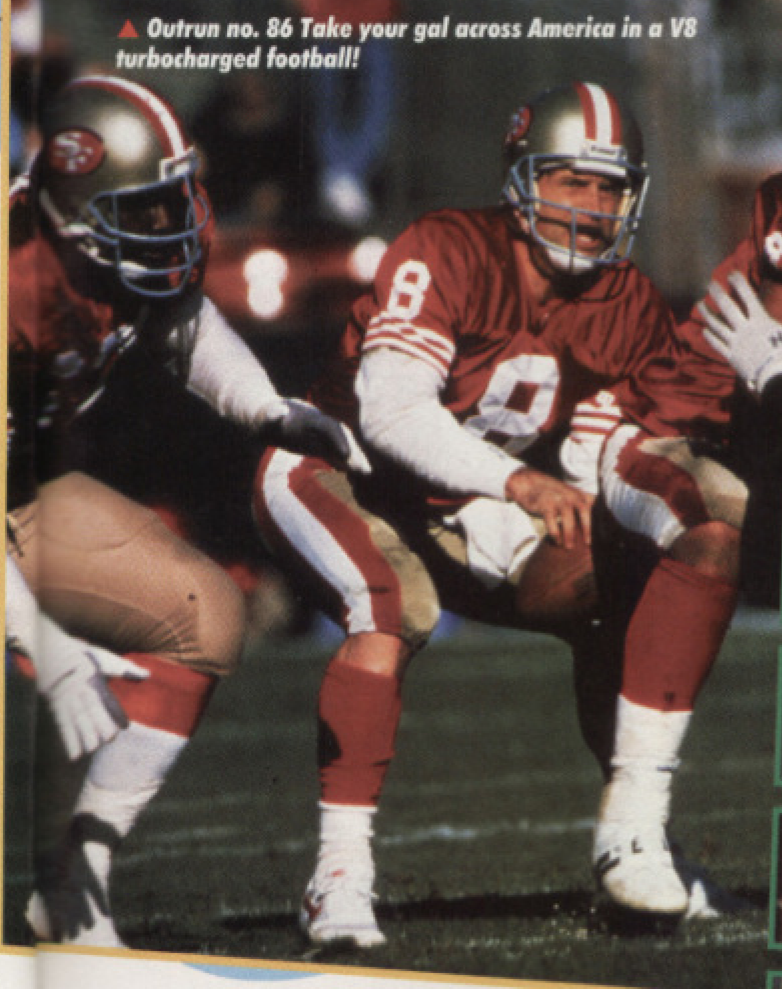


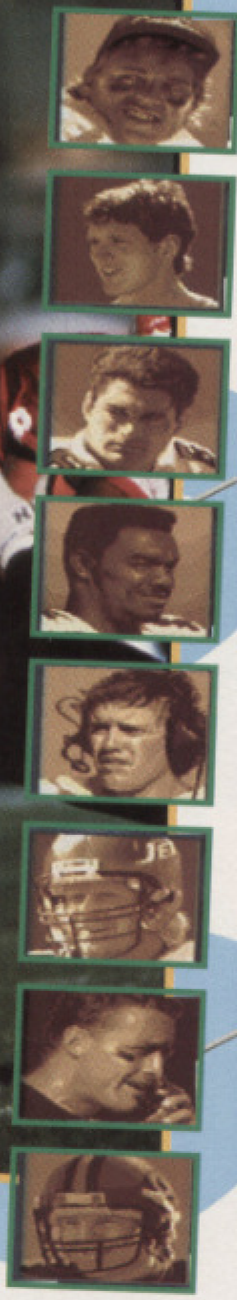
PAUL

Without a doubt Madden is the business when it comes down to American footie sims. I was however very impressed by NFL and its attempt to break from the standard game mould with the additional games and styles. In terms of graphics, the matches themselves are a bit on the dull side. But at the end of the day it's all about how the game plays, and I've no complaints in this department. A winner for non-Madden owners.

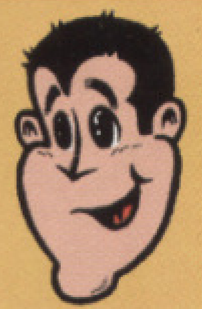


▲ Outrun no. 86 Take your gal across America in a V8 turbocharged football!





COMMENT



GUS

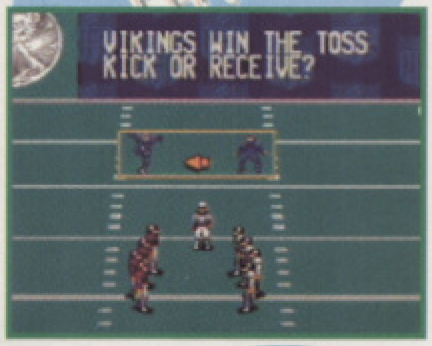
Compared to last month's abominable Unnecessary Roughness, any other American Football game is going to appear to have something going for it. NFL Quarterback club actually does. The curious quarterback challenge looks superfluous at the start, but quickly reveals itself to be a playable little multi-event game, even better if you have several human opponents. The main game is modelled pretty closely to Madden's but suffers in the visual department and from slightly stilted gameplay. The simulation option is an intriguing idea, but I shouldn't think it will get used too much, as the scenarios are restricting. As with most games of this type, a multi-tap multiplies the fun factor, and the unique fifth player mode has its worth. Not a Madden beater, but solid as Aikman's washboard stomach.

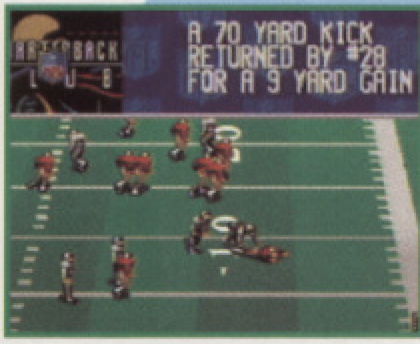
FAR FROM THE MADDEN CROWD

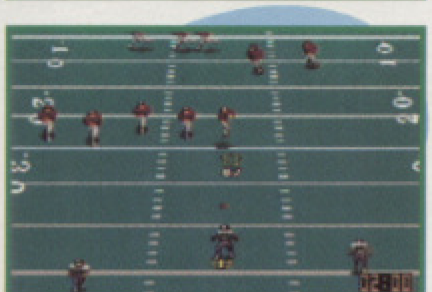
The grid-iron game is styled in a similar fashion to EA's John Madden's. Two teams face each other on a vertical pitch and select their offensive/defensive plays from a triple diagramatic window. Selections are made by entering sub-menus; first picking a short, medium or long play, then picking a formation and finally tactics for that formation. The permutations lead to hundreds of different team plays. After the play is called, you may control any of the team characters you wish.

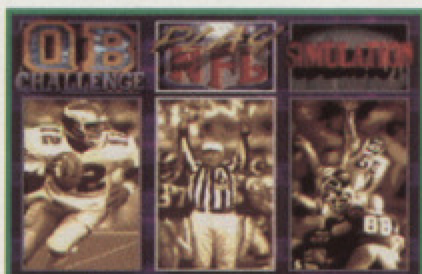
▼ Burly men enjoying themselves on a muddy field. Yesterday.











FOUR AND ONE IN THE FOURTH

The third novel option of QB Club is Simulation mode. Using the same engine and controls as the game proper, the option selects key scenarios from great matches of the past and challenges to replicate the winning teams feats. Often this means scoring late on in the match with some audacious plays.

GRAPHICS 70

▲The quarterback challenge looks good, and the main layout is clear.
▼The diagrams of plays are titchy, and the pitch looks pretty drab.

SOUND 55

▼Pretty weak FX and irrelevant music.

PLAYABILITY 82

▲The QB challenge is fun, and the main game is good with lots of human players.
▼Comes across as a bit specialist and lacking in pace.

LASTABILITY 80

▲With the simulation scenarios and five player game, there quite a lot of play here for grid-iron fans.

VFM 79

▲More than just an American Football game.
▼Some older, cheaper copies of Madden are just as much fun.

OVERALL 81

Not the definitive American footy game, but quarterback club suceeds by taking a specialist approach.

TOUG
CON



1 PLAYERS

32 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORT

PRICE	£49.99
BY	EA
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOYPAD
CONTINUES:PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS:NONE
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOWISH
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
Beat fourth boxer.

ORIGIN
Based on the TV series from the other side of the Great Divide, in which grown men beat each other to a pulp.

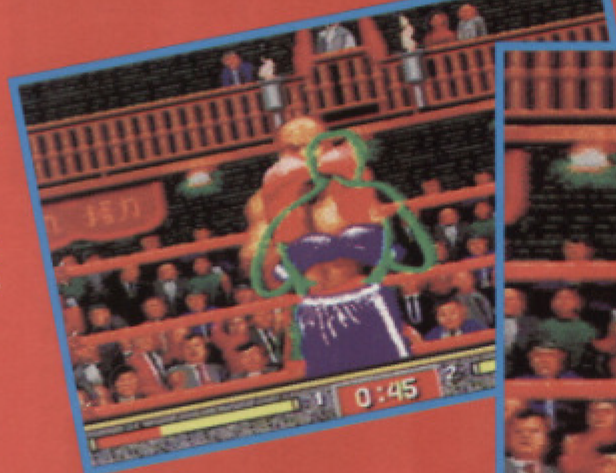
GAME BREAKDOWN

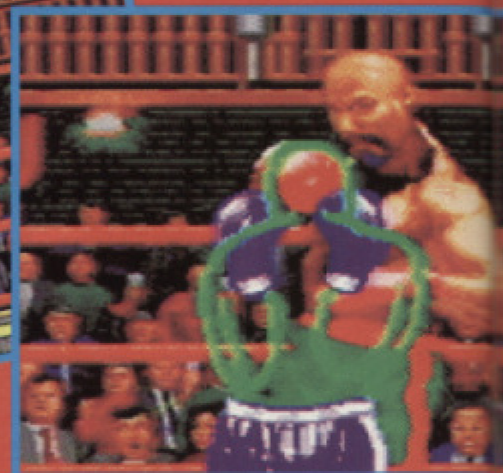


GAME AIM
Choose a boxer from one of the four continents and slug your way to the top of the Toughman Challenge.

"Aw-roight my sahn! You've made yaw mum right proud ya know. That woz summink special out there. The way ya laid into 'im, it brought a tear to me eye. Honest I forwt you woz gunna kill 'im back there. All those left 'ooks and uppercuts, you mashed 'im and went back faw more. A truly gratuitous victory. So wots this little chat abaht then? Well I'll tell yuz sahn, me and yaw fatha 'ave been 'avin a bit of a chat abaht puttin' ya up for the Toughman Contest. Wot ya mean, ya don't wanna fight? You're made for it, and you'll make uz millionaires!

Roight, all you've gotta do is get on a plane to America and fight 23 utha meat 'eds from around the world. It's so easy sahn, free rounds of a minute a piece, and all you've gotta do is make mincemeat of the lightweight. Nuffink easier! And you'll neva guess wot — those weirdo Yanks only go an' give yuz three special moves wiv which you can beat 'em to a pulp. Now go on owt there and make yaw mum rich beyond her wildest dreams. That's a good lad!



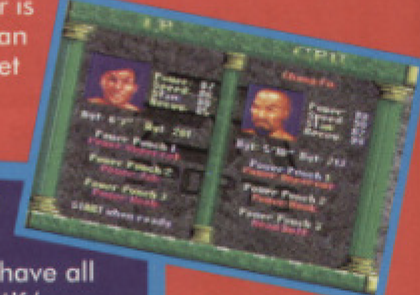


▲ *We're extraordinary fighters here at Rentaghost...*



FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY

The Toughman Contest is no piece of cake so selecting the perfect candidate is of paramount importance. To help you make the right decision, each boxer has been broken down by a team of statisticians. Scored out of 100, the vital statistics cover power of punches; how light your fighter is on his feet; the amount to damage he can withstand; and speed at which he can get back on his feet after hitting the mat.



▲ *Steve struggled to caption the dull picture.*

STING LIKE A BEE

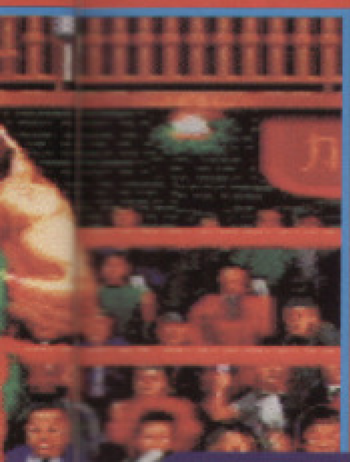
Along with the usual selection of uppercuts, jabs, and hooks, the boxers have all been genetically engineered to release special move attacks. In a semi-MK/Streetfighter sort of way, a combination of D-Pad presses and button pushes let rip killer moves such as the Super Uppercut, the Windmill Wind-up (a cartoon caper in which the boxer winds up his arm like an elastic band to unleashes an almighty blow), and the Popeye Punch (pretty much self-explanatory). But instead of assigning different special moves to individual boxers, the player has the choice in the pre-fight screen to pick any three special moves for their prize fighter.

▼ *He could have at least combed his hair before he came out.*



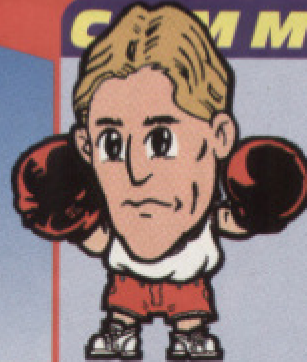








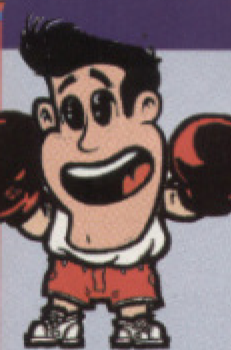
▲ Clubber's hand had swollen enormously...



COMMENT

PAUL

The greatest shame about Toughman Contest is that it could have been a contender. The prospect of a 32MEG boxing game had all the promise of huge sprites, plentiful animation, and great playability. But even though it has the first ingredient, the latter two are sorely missing. The sprites are big and chunky, but they move in slo-mo, and even come to a sporadic halt after any special move is performed. Talking of special moves, they may be selectable from the menu and varied, but you never feel as if you're control and they happen almost by accident. With a bit of patience not all hope is lost, as it is possible to compensate for the lack of responsiveness, but in all truth Toughman Contest doesn't have the form to be a belt challenger.



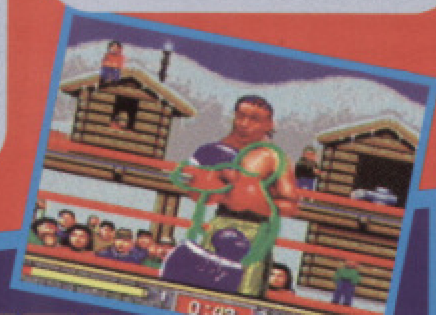
COMMENT

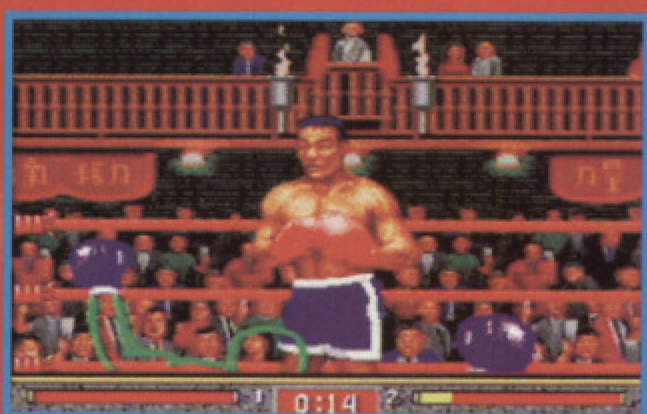
STEVE

It looks like EA are out to take on Nintendo's Super Punch Out head on. Whilst I prefer Toughman to the Super NES game, though, both suffer from a lack of staying power. Ever since the likes of Frank Bruno's Boxing for the Spectrum, the art of pugilism have failed to recreate the action of the ring. Boxing is a sport of skill and agility and whilst Toughman comes close to recreating that, it never seems to gel as a game and is sluggish and uninvolving.







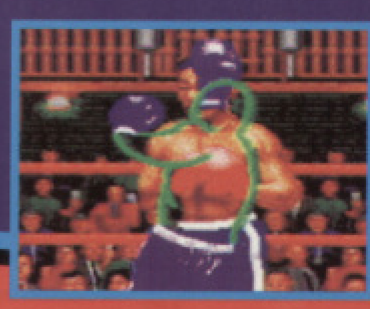


TOWEL DOWN

Defeat comes to even the best. And there comes a point in every boxer's life where he must face up to a pasting from some of the younger and faster boxers. So to save face, and maintain a hint of dignity, the option to throw in the towel is available. A word of caution though — only ever throw in the towel if you are certain that even a draw is beyond all hope,as it's not something you want to be remembered for in the long term.







GRAPHICS 73

▲ Huge character sprites and nicely designed animated backdrops.
▼ But the boxer animation is severely lacking, and slows down frequently.

SOUND 75

▲ The thwacks and cracks are good and meaty, adding some weight to the punches.
▼ But the digitised speech is a little weak.

PLAYABILITY 64

▼ Toughman's biggest downfall — it doesn't feel as if you're in control of the character and the action slows after a special move.

LASTABILITY 65

▲ A tough challenge to beat the other opponents and master the special moves.
▼ But this is mainly to do with the clumsy and unresponsive control system.

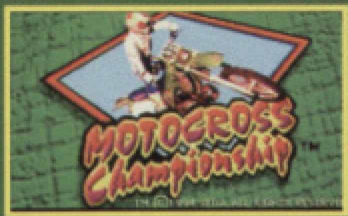
VFM 67

▲ £49.99 for 32 MEG is not bad value.
▼ If only the game was champion enough to justify the money.

OVERALL 64

EA's biggest game to date, but one that misses the mark through lack of playability. Not a heavy weight contender.

MOTOCROSS Championship



1-2 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE	£49.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: AVERAGE
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
N/A

ORIGIN
Takes more than a pinch of inspiration from the Road Rash series, although the 3D style racing action is fairly original.

GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY, REFLEXES, CHALLENGE, ACTION, STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Come first in all the races, win money and have a go on a superbike.



When I were but a young lad, kids didn't have mini motorbikes to burn around on. We had to make do with BMXs – you know, little push-bikes with tiny wheels and seats that made your bum hurt a lot. The best thing about a BMX was the tricks you could do to impress the girls. Bunny hops, Endos and Aerials were all part of my daily repertoire and if nothing else, I was happy that you couldn't pull off these kinds of tricks on some spawny rich kid's motorbike.

But alas, the halcyon days of BMX-ing are over . It's all mountain bike-this, mountain bike-that now. And junior Motocross too, if your parents have a few thousand quid to spare. Or a couple of hundred to kit you out with a 32X and a silicon version of the sport. Sega's Motocross 32X takes most of its meat from the Road Rash series, using the same 3-D perspective. There's three bikes, 12 tracks and a split-screen two player mode thrown in for good measure. And you can duff up the other competitors too.

VISIT THE PYRAMIDS

Actually, that headline is a complete lie. You can't visit the Pyramids at all. In fact you don't get to visit anywhere remotely interesting, simply because the tracks aren't set anywhere. But why not make up a pretend location for yourself? Barbados, Morocco, Australia, the choice is yours!







TWICE THE FUN!

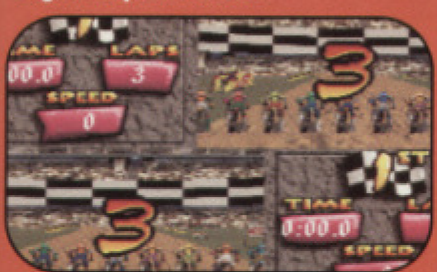
On Motocross you and a friend (if you have one) can team up for some bonding-type competitive fun. You can even fight each other if you want! But obviously the aim is to win the race, which incidentally is fairly easy if your partner falls off their bike a couple of times. You see, it takes them so long to get back on the thing, that you'll be miles ahead, racing on to glorious victory. Lesson one: DON'T, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, FALL OFF YOUR BIKE



▲ *One example of the how the split-screen mode works visually.*



▲ *Got that? Well here's another, just to get the point across.*



▲ *And again...This time there's a large number three to further interest you.*

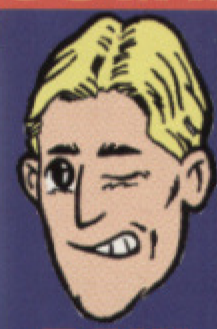
COMMENT



GUS

Motocross either started out as a nice 3D texture mapping routine, or a company directive to 'get a freakin' racing game out for our machine'. Either way, the end result has not been worth the interim effort. The scaling hardly makes for a smoother or more believable sense of movement than conventional Megadrive racing games. There's also a distinct lack of options or variety surrounding the unimpressive engine. Nothing can save this from looking like a hasty piece of work worth avoiding.

COMMENT



PAUL

I was really looking forward to playing this, as from early videos of the game, it looked as though 32X owners would be in for a treat. Unfortunately, the gameplay doesn't seem to have progressed much since then, and as a result, Motocross has a very unfinished feel about it. The graphics are absolutely dire – the racers are quite blurry and badly drawn, and all the tracks look the same. The races go on for too long, and at the beginning of each one, it's very difficult to see where you're going. The two player mode is pretty poor too, and almost half of each player's screen is obscured with useless information. Not the best release we've seen on the 32X, by any means.







OOH! HE'S THE LEADER OF THE PACK!

Unlike most bikin' sims where there's loads of bikes to choose from, but you have to earn money to buy them, Motocross allows you to choose any bike from the beginning. There's only three bikes in all though, so I don't expect this process will take you very long. Anyway, for those of a nervous disposition, there's the 50cc fartmobile. More experienced players can go for the blisteringly fast 125cc, and the reckless types amongst you will go for the Superbike – a delicious hybrid of speed and reliability. Lesson two? We-ell: ALWAYS CHOOSE THE SUPERBIKE. THE OTHERS ARE A LOAD OF SH...



GRAPHICS

68

▲ Not much to crow about here I'm afraid. Nice er, mud?
▼ Blurry graphics and square-looking bikes.

SOUND

71

▲ Hey! Rockin' man! Should go down well with any Bon Jovi fans
▼ If there's any left, that is.

PLAYABILITY

65

▲ Easy to get into, and even provides some entertainment for a while.
▼ But overall, it's just too shallow, with little incentive to keep playing.

LASTABILITY

58

▲ I'd like to say that "it will appeal to fans of the genre"
▼ But it won't. Has very little lastability.

VFM

50

▼ With little lastability and very poor graphics, there's certainly not much value for money here.

OVERALL

63

Look, I know there's not many games out for the 32X, but don't let that fool you into shelling out for this. Very poor.



1-6 PLAYERS

CD MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORTS

PRICE TBA

BY VIRGIN

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: TERRIBLE
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
25 OVER PAR!

ORIGIN
Based on a popular PC game, using video footage of the Torrey Pines golf links.

GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY
REFLEXES
CHALLENGE
ACTION
STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Like any golf game, get around the course in as few strokes as possible.

LINKS: The Challenge of Golf

The biggest problem that software houses find when preparing a new golf sim for the Megadrive-owning public is not centred on coding, or any esoteric programming matter. They find it hard to locate a golfer who hasn't endorsed a previous golf game. Jack Niklaus, Nick Faldo etc. They've all done it. Someone had suggested that Elsie Miggins, who likes to do a few holes around Hartlepool's municipal links might be interested in putting her name to this game, but it seems she's already agreed to appear in a packshot for Nobbysoft's 'Lobotomy Golf: The Longest Trek'.

Obviously, Virgin were unable to find an endorser for Links. Or perhaps they just called it that for the hell of it. Let the game stand on its own, they may have thought — there's no need for fancy celebs to shift it. Au contraire....



▲ *Links stinks, basically.*

EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

Play a shot you are proud of and you can watch it again using the simple replay menu. View the shot from the point where it was struck, or from a position near to where it lands.

AERIAL ULTRA

The Torrey Pines course has been filmed from the air and the footage turned into digital video for Links. There is an option to view each hole with a brief commentary, before you play it. The lush green graphics seen in the flypast are not those of the game itself, but the layout of the holes is accurate.



▲ *Screenshot taken just after huge gun battle between players.*





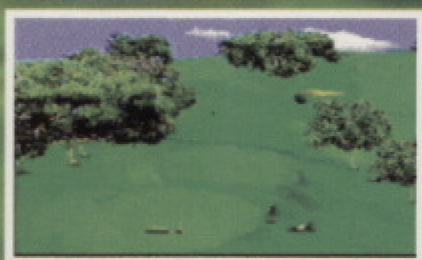








▲ *Pic taken before full motion video nuclear armageddon and fire storm.*



NO GREAT SURPRISE

The control format is much the same as other golf games. Clubs are selected from a menu. Shot type is changeable and shots are taken with a timed swingometer. The big change is aiming. Instead of moving an aiming cursor, you alter the view by degrees to the left and right, then wait for the screen to redraw. And wait, and wait...





COMMENT



GUS

"So realistic you can almost smell the greens!" geeks the packaging. "That's a good thing", it adds inanely. Well I can smell something from Links, but it isn't green. Playing Links is a mind-numbing experience for two principal reasons. Firstly, the screen updates everytime you change your aim, and it has to read from the CD to do it, meaning long periods of waiting time. Secondly, the in-game graphics and the holes themselves are tedious. The fancy froth of flying footage and commentator's tuppence-worth (and it is only worth tuppence) don't add anything to a game consisting of a single course. Avoid this crummy rubbish and get PGA 3.

COMMENT



PAUL

Oh deary, deary me. How did this pile of rubbish get past the first stages of playtesting? The voiceover and the FMV are nice touches, but nothing more than cosmetic cover-ups. Once you start to play the holes, the true painful sluggishness of the access time, the apalling resolution, and pathetic graphics, will drive you up the wall. Avoid this sorry excuse for a golf sim at all costs, and play safe with the PGA quality titles.

GRAPHICS

▲ The FMV is pretty clear and nicely green.
▼ All the other graphics are mince.

54

SOUND

▼ The speech is repetitive and irritating. Other sounds are unremarkable.

57

PLAYABILITY

▼ The wait for CD access is totally unacceptable. The holes themselves aren't any great shakes.

28

LASTABILITY

▼ Frustration reinforced with a lack of depth seals the fate of this golf abomination.

22

VFM

▼ Has no value added features beyond the gimmicky filmed bits.

15

OVERALL

20

Links? The Missing Links, more like. This is backwards evolution in a sport thats been done to death, frankly.



1 PLAYER | **8 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE MARCH

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: ONE
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
THIRD RUNE

ORIGIN
Based on the not-exactly-blockbusting film which came out five or so years back.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Collect the six runes needed to send the evil Warlock back whence he came.



WARLOCK

Poor old Julian Sands. There he is pitched as the 'greatest English actor ever' after his appearance in A Room With A View, and before he knows it his career hits Crapville with appearances in turds like Arachnaphobia, Boxing Helena, and Warlock. Let's hope Hugh Grant takes note.

Still, in this strange topsy-turvey world of video games where sure-fire hits are turned into binary dogs like Pink Goes To Hollywood, Mr Sand's appearance as the titular Warlock a few years back (and in the straight-to-video sequel) obviously won him a fan at Acclaim, as the film has been the inspiration for their latest arcade/adventure.





COMMENT



GUS

Warlock doesn't do itself any favours with the appearance of its first few levels. It looks like the video game equivalent of a hangover — rough. But unlike many more unfortunate titles, the initial disappointment and confusion lifts somewhat with the prospect of a tough challenge and gameplay that mixes platform blasting with puzzle genres. As you get deeper, the tasks get more complex and the gameplay more rewarding. Okay, it's never going to win a beauty contest, but it's far better company than many of those Pamela Anderson platformers.

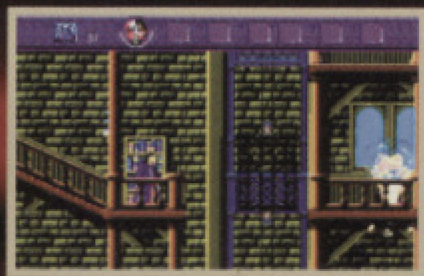
RUNE FOR ONE MORE ON TOP

Warlock's plot tells of the coming of evil (ie Julian Sands) and how the only way to stop him placing the Earth in eternal darkness and all that usual Black Magic malarkey is to collect six runestones and use them against him. However, as the runes are spread across the world and the Warlock is using his powers to turn everyday pets and people to evil, gathering them is going to be no walk in the park. The game is spread across twelve stages, which scroll across the usual eight directions and contain a wealth of the Warlock's evil sidekicks. Cast as the unlikely raincoat-wearing hero, you have been given a magic sprite and an unlimited supply of energy bolts which are used to collect objects and fend off enemy attacks respectively.











BACK, FOUL FIEND! AIEEE!

The runes are located at the end of every second stage. Each world is inhabited by a weird assortment of spiders, controlled humans and othersuch dangerous critters, and later levels complicate things further with the addition of natural hazards such as dripping acid. A trio of energy bolts sees off most of the energy-sapping baddies, but the Warlock himself also appears every now and then and is a lot more resilient. Similarly, he is also better equipped than his minions and can attack using animated statues whilst hiding behind a forcefield or can send bolts of fire across the floor to KO the player.

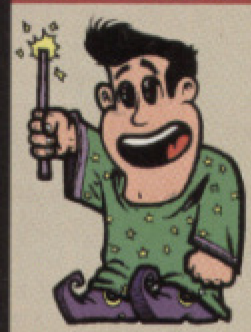








COMMENT



STEVE

I have to say that I really disliked Warlock when I first played it. It looks like a hastily cobbled together platformer with very little in it, but behind the dated graphics lurks a large and very challenging arcade/adventure. Whilst the Warlock films didn't exactly set the world alight, they had enough content to spawn several game ideas, and the best of them are contained within this cart. As the player searches for potions and runes, statues come to life, huge spiders scuttle across the floor and there's more than enough to shoot and collect. If I had to level a couple of complaints, it would have to be that the graphics are extremely rough with skinny sprites and gaudy backdrops, and that the game gets a little too hard too soon (ie the second Warlock confrontation), but this is a solid enough arcade/adventure. It probably won't sell because of the weak licence and the duff aesthetics, but those in search of a good challenge could do a lot worse than this.



GRAPHICS 54

▲ Nice picture of Julian Sands if you lose.
▼ Awful sprites, over-colourful backdrops which obscure the bad guys.

SOUND 64

▲ Adequate zapping effects.
▼ Naff all else of note.

PLAYABILITY 78

▲ The smaller prelude stages ease the player in, but the secondary stages offer a greater challenge and really open the game up.

LASTABILITY 73

▲ It's tough (perhaps too tough at times), but the plus side is it'll take ages to find all the runes.
▼ ...If you can put up with being placed at the start of the level again if you die.

VFM 75

▼ It'll weigh in at the forty-five quid mark which is a little too much for a game with as little polish as this.

OVERALL 72

A crap-looking veneer hides a very challenging platformer. If you fancy something a little different give it a whirl. But, be warned, it can get frustrating...

STARGATE

1-2 PLAYERS	2 MEG
PRICE	29.99
BY	ACCLAIM
RELEASE	MARCH
GAME TYPE	PUZZLE

And, lo, the great alien deity Ra looked down upon his slaves and saw strangers among them. He who lives with Goldie Hawn and that bloke out of that crap Jack Nicholson Werewolf film had managed to amass the skinny locals into some sort of army which were threatening to overthrow the alien leader's power.

Worst of all, though, a fatal flaw in Ra's plan for domination over this distant sandbowl had been exposed — he was in fact that not exactly hard bloke out of The Crying Game. Ony one thing remained to do: send the attackers a series of puzzles and hope they'll become so confused

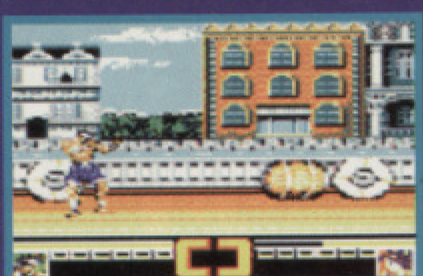
TILE BE THERE

The Game Gear version of Stargate takes a... well, more overall view of the movie's plot than the platfrom-based Megadrive game. Ra is after control of a series of Stargates and, assuming the role of Daniel, you must defeat a series of his consorts in a tile-based puzzle game. Basically, a selection of illustrated tiles are shown at the top of the play area, and duplicates are dropped into a circular play area. When stacked in piles of three or more similar tiles, the relevant icon disappears. This is then repeated until all the tiles are removed — although you are occasionally asked to do so twice. The winner then secures a Stargate on the game's Othello-like galactic map, with the owner of the most squares saving or destroying the galaxy.



FATAL FURY SPECIAL

1-2 PLAYERS	4 MEG
PRICE	29.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MARCH
GAME TYPE	ADVENTURE

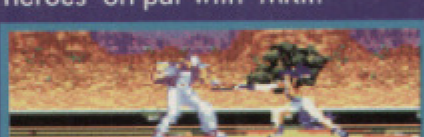




▲ *The world warriors head for Barsnley. Da da ra da!*

Imagine being a multi-millionaire who doesn't have to worry about anything cash-related. If you wanted a yacht, you could just go out and get one. If you saw the latest in TVs, you could get one delivered instantly. But imagine that, after getting used to such a lifestyle, it was taken away. All of a sudden, after years of blowing thousands on food, you couldn't afford a cheese sarnie. Well that's what this Fatal Fury conversion is like.

Andy Bogarde and his cronies started life as 100MEG superstars using massive sprites, intricate backdrops and stunning-looking moves. In Fatal Fury and its sequels there was nothing they couldn't do. They fought on moving trains, used the largest sprites ever seen in a beat 'em up, and astounded both Neo Geo owners with stunning special moves. Now, however, they've landed with a bump in this 4MEG handheld bout. With their numbers and size reduced, Andy and co have gone from being the largest handheld heroes on par with MKII.

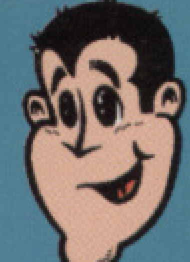








COMMENT



GUS

There are more failures amongst Game Gear combat games than successes and you can go and stand with... the failures! Yes, wobbly sprites and blockyville-on-the-chunk style backdrops. Gameplay is so hit-and-miss that I'd advise playing with your toes. Take your boots off first or you might do your Game Gear a damage. I certainly felt tempted after half an hour of this.


▲ *Gut wrenching Stargate action.*



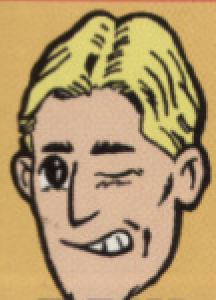
▲ *Bow, earthlings to my intergalactic games compendium.*



▲ *Ba-ba-ba-ba bird's eye chicken's the word.*



COMMENT


PAUL

Contrary to Steve, I found StarGate to be quite a tidy little puzzler. Once you've adjusted to the over-head perspective, and got up to full speed, the puzzles and the Battle Mode option prove to be reasonably entertaining. Nothing to match Columns, but not a bad effort nonetheless.

COMMENT


STEVE

You know how Tetris and Columns have a strange addictive quality which keeps the basic idea fresh? Well, that elusive element is sadly missing from this handheld interpretation of Stargate. Whilst the basic tile-piling idea is solid enough, the game never seems to pick up speed or throw anything trouble-some at the player. Ra's men don't really pose much of a problem, and without the addition of particularly tough opponents, the whole thing soon gets dreary. Still, whilst Game gear Stargate doesnt follow the plot of the film particularly closely, they do have one thing in common: they're both dull in the extreme.

GRAPHICS 62
Nice intermission characters, but bland use of colour.game itself.

SOUND 58
A couple of tunes and a smattering of dull effects.

PLAYABILITY 74
Easy to pick up, but never gets taxing.

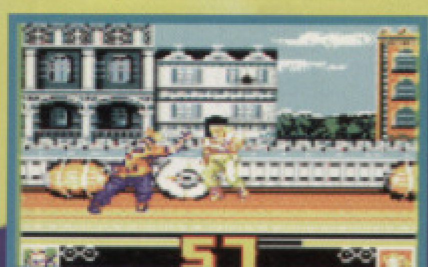
LASTABILITY 67
The opponents could be tougher — and should.

VFM 63
There are much better puzzlers on the rounds.

OVERALL 66
A brave idea, but ultimately let down by its dull computer-controlled players.

SAME AS IT EVER WAS

Fatal Fury Special draws ideas from past conversions of the series. Nine fighters are on offer as the player battles their way across the world, each of whom has a variety of kicks and punches which are effected using the two buttons. Similarly, each of the fighters has a selection of special moves akin to those in Street Fighter and MKII, allowing them to pull off fireballs etc.

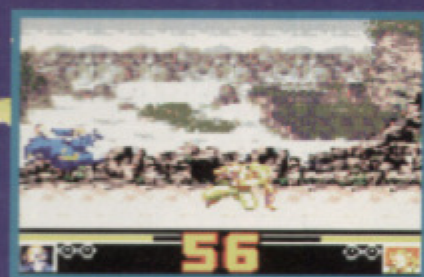




COMMENT


STEVE

The Megadrive version of Fatal Fury rates as one of the worst beat 'em ups I've played. In the conversion from the massive Neo Geo game ended up resembling a very second-rate Street Fighter clone. Sadly, the downward conversion spiral seems to continue as Game Gear Fatal Fury Special is even worse. MKII for the hand-held proves such conversions can be skillfully done, but fatal is a very scrappy conversion. The sprites are weak and zip around with very little realism, and the moves are limited. Granted, there are special moves to be had, but as the game requires very little skill to progress they become rather redundant. I'd stick to MKII if I were you.





▲ *Reduced to a pile of coloured thingies.*



GRAPHICS 54
Stick-like sprites, losers in the animation stakes. Poor backdrops.

SOUND 36
A tinny tune, and awful sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 59
Fast, but little skill is required. Fast kicks should suffice.

LASTABILITY 42
Nine characters, but it won't take you long to reach Geese Howard.

VFM 47
Nah, sorry we really can't recommend this. MKII is stacks better.

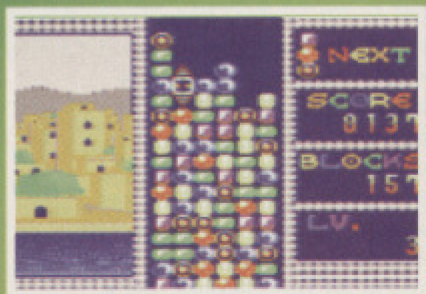
OVERALL 46
Such a coin-op was never meant to grace the humble Game Gear. Basic and shoddy.

SUPER COLUMNS

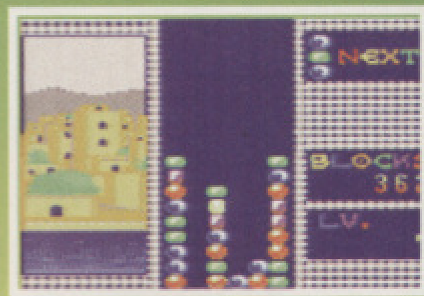
PLAYERS	1-2
MEG	4
PRICE	£19.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	MARCH
GAME TYPE	PUZZLE

It was a night like any other night, but for one particular Game Gear cartridge, it was a night he would never forget. Mike Columns was an ordinary handheld puzzle game, driving home from another hard day in the city, when one of the of tyres on his station-wagon blew out. Call it luck, call it divine intervention, but somehow, Mike managed to steer the uncontrollable car safely off the road and down a cliff, turning it into a raging fireball. Stumbling unharmed from the wreckage he spotted a tower in the distance and, believing it may have a phone, he headed for the building. It was only when he was metres away, that Mike realised — this was no tower, it was a huge atomic bomb. It was a nuclear test site and Mike Columns was standing at Ground Zero! The explosion ripped through his puny body like a fork through noodles, yet somehow Mike Columns lived. However, he was no longer an ordinary puzzle game. Bathed in the radioactive energy of a thousand suns he had become... Super Columns!

Join us now as we follow the thrilling adventures of the Protector of Puzzle Games. Marvel to his incredible shape-dropping abilities. And cheer as he thwarts yet another insidious plot hatched by his arch-nemesis, the Soviet super-scientist Dr Tetris! For this is no ordinary game! Where once there stood just Columns – a puzzle game in which coloured gems fall down the screen – there now stands Super



▲ Oi! Watch me crown jewels.



▲ Not so many blocks as the other screenshot. Snore.

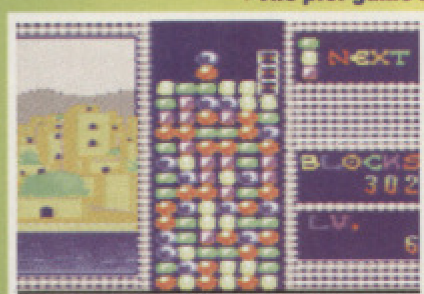


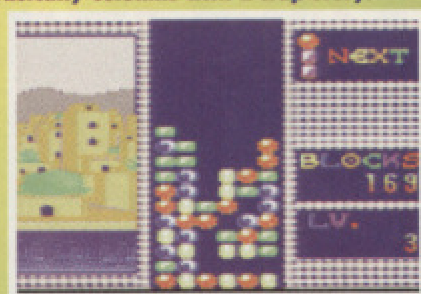
▲ The motley crue.

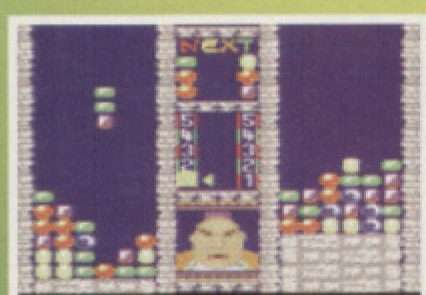
ICED GEMS

So what makes Super Columns so different from Columns? Well, not a lot actually. It's still the same old game of joining three like-coloured gems to make them vanish from the screen. Now, however, there are three different ways to enjoy delicious Columns. There's traditional Columns,, there's Story Mode, in which guards in a palace challenge you to a game of Columns. Finally there's Flash Columns, the aim of which, is to gain the highly prized flashing columns, a sort of joker column that make all makes masses of identically-coloured gems vanish.

▼The plot game is basically Columns with a crap story.

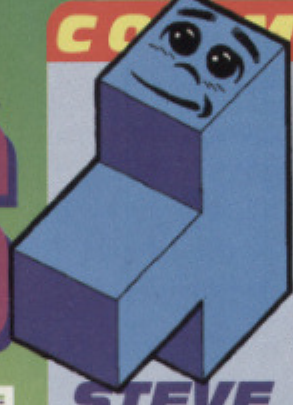








COMMENT

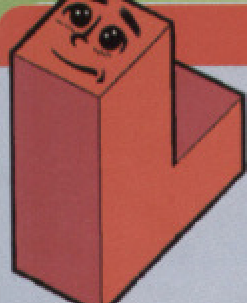


STEVE

While there's no doubt that Columns has always been an enjoyable puzzle game, it's certainly never been up to the standard of its forerunner, Tetris. Unfortunately, Super Columns has very little to offer over the basic game.The Story Mode (cruddy story bits aside) is probably the most inventive addition with a variety of special attacks that you can use on your opponents.

Even this though, just comes across as a weaker version of Mean Bean Machine. This isn't to say that Super Columns is bad, it's just that Mean Bean Machine is a far superior puzzle game and really, there's very little reason to buy both.

COMMENT



GUS

I can't really see the point in Super Columns. It has very little over the orignal version, which was out at the very beginning with the Game Gear and which is now dirt cheap. Last year's Mean Bean Machine was a much more sensible update, with more playability, but the special attacks in the story game are actually quite irritating. I'd go for Mean Bean.

GRAPHICS 74
Very simple looking, but that makes it very clear to see what's going on. Which is good.

SOUND 62
Little bleeps and chimes and some annoying alien mind-ray music. Not easy listening.

PLAYABILITY 74
That Columns playability still runs true. Although rotating some columns is a fiddle..

LASTABILITY 75
If you like Columns you could play it forever. If not, there's little variety bar the story.

VFM 74
Sega's new cheaper pricing makes it quite tempting.

OVERALL 74
It's just Columns again. A good puzzle game, but Mean Bean Machine is better.

MEGA SHOP GUIDE

THIS SECTION SHOWS YOU WHICH SHOPS ARE NEAR YOU. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LOOK FOR YOUR LOCAL AREA HEADING - AND DETAILS OF THE SHOPS ARE LISTED HERE.

LEEDS

INVERNESS

BOLTON

LEEDS

E. SUSSEX

MEAN YOB



Once again, an insult-free zone (almost, anyway: one pair of turds got through the net), as the meanest Yob this side of French footy gets to grips with your letters. This month laugh with us as a fan of some herb magazine writes in, and as an Australian gets to grips with the differences between Q&A and these pages. Honestly, it's funnier than an episode of The Upper Hand around here. Sometimes.
If you want to write to Yob, send your letters to:
INFLATABLE LAURA INGLES PUNCH BAGS,
MEAN YOB,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

PETER PURVES

Dear Yob
Congratulations on binning the totally banal insulting letters usually printed on your page. I'm sure the intellectually challenged gits who usually write in to it will be most disappointed — I won't be. This issue of the magazine was much better, for it seemed more informative — something older readers have been crying out for. Most mags drivel on like they've been written by half-witted dribbling loonies. I hope that MEAN MACHINES will continue to improve itself and rise above the other crappy magazines. I do like SEGA Magazine, but its reviews have to be questioned as it is an official magazine.
Chris May, Dobwalls, Cornwall
YOB: **We were getting a bit tossed off with all the drivel, too. I mean, I know I'm the meanest sod this side of Eric 'flying feet' Cantona, but it's nice to have a break from the 'you wind-inducing... blah... bogey-eating...etc, etc', which got to epidemic proportions. Still, whenever a real git gets up my nose, needless to say he or she will know about it...**

JANET ELLIS

Dear Yob
I have wrote [sic] a poem about you, hope you like it.
Yob is a HOG,
Who smells like a DOG,
He swims in a BOG,
Like a big FROG.
Hope you liked it. Can you please kill the person who gave Yogi Bear on the Megadrive 51%, because it is major crap. It should only get 2%. Make sure you tear their ears off.
Hugh Dakers, Innellan, Scotland
YOB: **Steve recalls a time when, at infants school, a mate of his called David Walters wrote a poem about a cat called Mog who went for a jog and ended up falling over a log. You're not related are you?**

PETRA

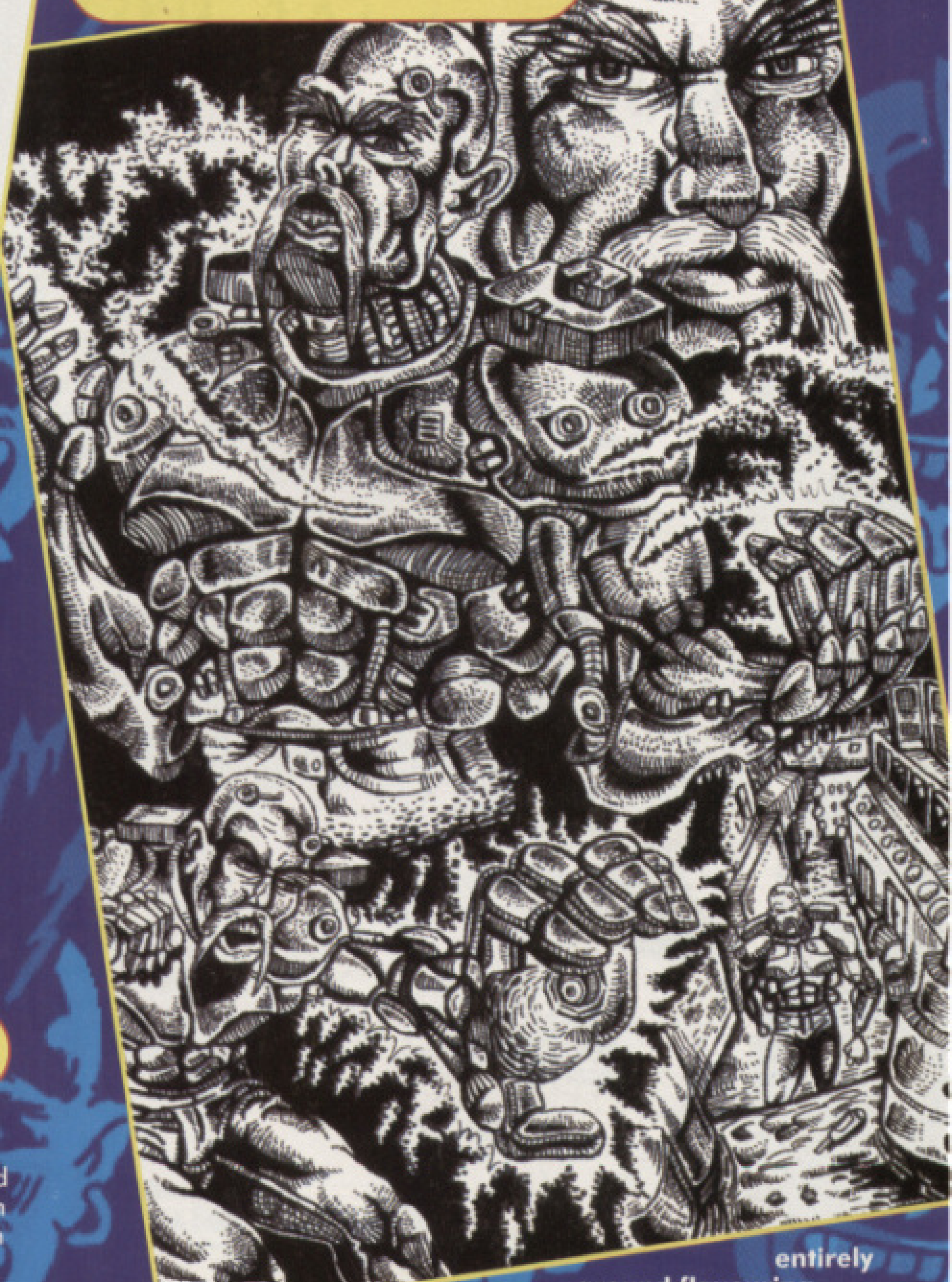
Dear Yob
I am writing to you about the 32X. I think it is a good idea to bring out a machine which could beat the pants off Nintendo's Ultra 64, even though the Saturn is far superior to the 32X. I mean the Ultra 64 will be out in 1996 and will be as big a failure as the CD32. Long live Sega.
Sam

▼ ***I've seen Gus' head on a pole before... Cheers, Dan Stroud.***





▲ Cheers, Shaz. A picture of our all-time favourite game. If we had a copy, it's yours.



▲ A very busy Street Of Rage, courtesy of Stuart Patrick.

Holdaway,
Bognor Regis, West Sussex
YOB:**Bognor Regis, eh? Or the last resort as it is known to the locals (Chichester-born Steve, anyway). As for your claim that the 32X is a better machine than the Ultra 64, isn't that a little unfair since the latter isn't out yet? You haven't been swimming in Bognor beach's brown water with your gob open have you? I think you're going down with something, that's all...**

BLEEP AND BOOSTER

Dear Yob
First of all congratulations on the best mag going. I read it every month and think it's top. When you want to look at a review or info on a game, MEAN MACHINES is probably the most reliable in the shop, unlike the other crud magazines — especially the nerds at Digitiser. One day when I came home from school, I had nothing to do but switch the TV on. I decided to watch Digitiser to see what they'd got, and was shocked to see such sad rubbish. It takes up too much space for what decent things could have been there. Anyway keep up the good work.
Michael Hilton, Manchester
YOB:**Of course, you realise by mocking Digitiser, they'll cop a mooey and send Steve a snotty fax calling him something food-related. Honestly, considering they keep sending faxes with such an obvious sense of wit, you'd think they'd be able to take a joke or knock or two...**

LESLEY JUDD

Dear Yob
I think you should go and pea in Sage [sic] Powers employees caps because I think Sage Power is the saddest mag ever next to MEAN MACHINES SAGE. I mean at least MEAN MACHINES SAGE does Master System reviews. I don't believe Sage Power even had the nerve to put the name on the cover. I mean they're total scum bags, they can't even get decent reviews.
Richard Palmer,
Cockermouth,
Cumbria
YOB:**Sage Power? No, sorry, that's a new one on me! I take it that's a magazine based entirely around flavouring herbs. As for peaing in anyone's cap, what is it with you and the gardening terms! I mean, your name is Richard Palmer, not Percy Thrower. Actually, Dick Palmer sort of suits you. And it sounds like your hobby.**



▼ An urgent message to Etham Soy: GO AND SEE A SHRINK! NOW!



▲ *Michael Clampitt shows Sparkster after he stayed in the sun too long..*

CHRIS TRACE

Dear Yob
I am really annoyed because I have been looking everywhere for Shining Force. I have Shining Force 2 and want the first one, but I can't find it anywhere. I'm not going to bother threatening to kill you, but please can I have a copy of Shining Force.
Geoff Phillips, Sudbury, Suffolk
YOB:**No. What do you think this is? Yob'll Fix It? Try calling Sega.**

JOHN NOAKES

Dear Yob
You may remember us. In your November issue we wrote demanding 5 billion pounds each. Will still have not received the money. This is your last warning. If we don't get the money tomorrow we will come to the office and slaughter your entire team with a chainsaw. We also got some great ideas from Mortal Kombat 2. We will tear off your arms and legs. Ha, ha!
Peter M and Alan G, Paisley, Scotland
YOB:**There was I thinking such banalities were long gone, when the Pillock Twins return to annoy. I swear you two were flies in a former life, as you seem the sort of people seen on the receiving end of a swat from a cow's tail. As for slaughtering the team with a chainsaw, I seriously doubt you'd know which end to you. When God was handing out brains, you thought he said trains and asked for a slow, stopping one. And one that was steam-powered.**

SIMON GROOM

Dear Yob
I think that taking all the letters containing mindless insults, and, er, not printing them in Issue 29 was a good idea. I think you should give a cash prize for the best letter each month (hint, hint). Will a Micro Machines 3 game be coming out, and if so when? Don't you think those Sooty puppets are top, you know the ones that come free with Coco Pops. Time to go I hear the sirens.
Joseph Farrell, Anytown
YOB:**We're working on a letter of the month thing, and dinlos who want to insult us will be pleased to see the imminent return of Mystic Yob. micro Machines is on the cards, but the format has yet to be decided — Saturn, probably. As for those Sooty puppets that come with Coco Pops: we wouldn't know. We've got better ways of turning the milk brown.**

VALERIE SINGLETON

Dear Yob
How dare you slag the Equalizer down. He's a lot more powerful and stronger than you could ever be sunshine. You're about as hard as a sheep in leather. Anyway I phoned up my old buddy Edward Woodward and told him to come round to kick your head in.
Adam Eneve, Redditch
YOB:**Yeah, and when we met him at the door, he was so shagged out after climbing two flights of stairs, he had to have a lie down and a piere of apple pie. Needless to say, Farringdon has since been overrun by the thugs and hoodlums he is now powerless to fight.**



▲ **Pom sent in this picture of a Daytona car killing a jay-walker.**

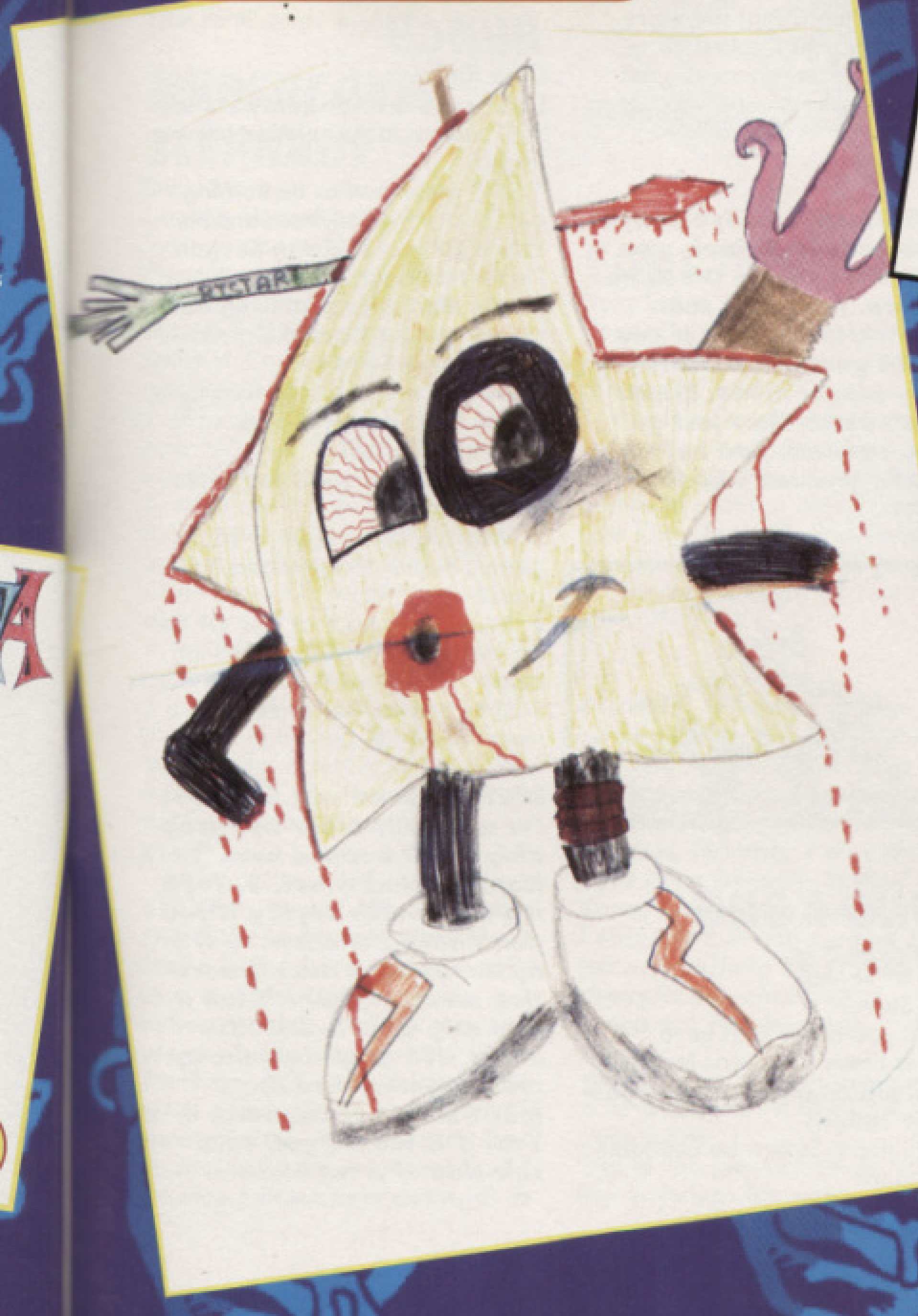
YVETTE FIELDING

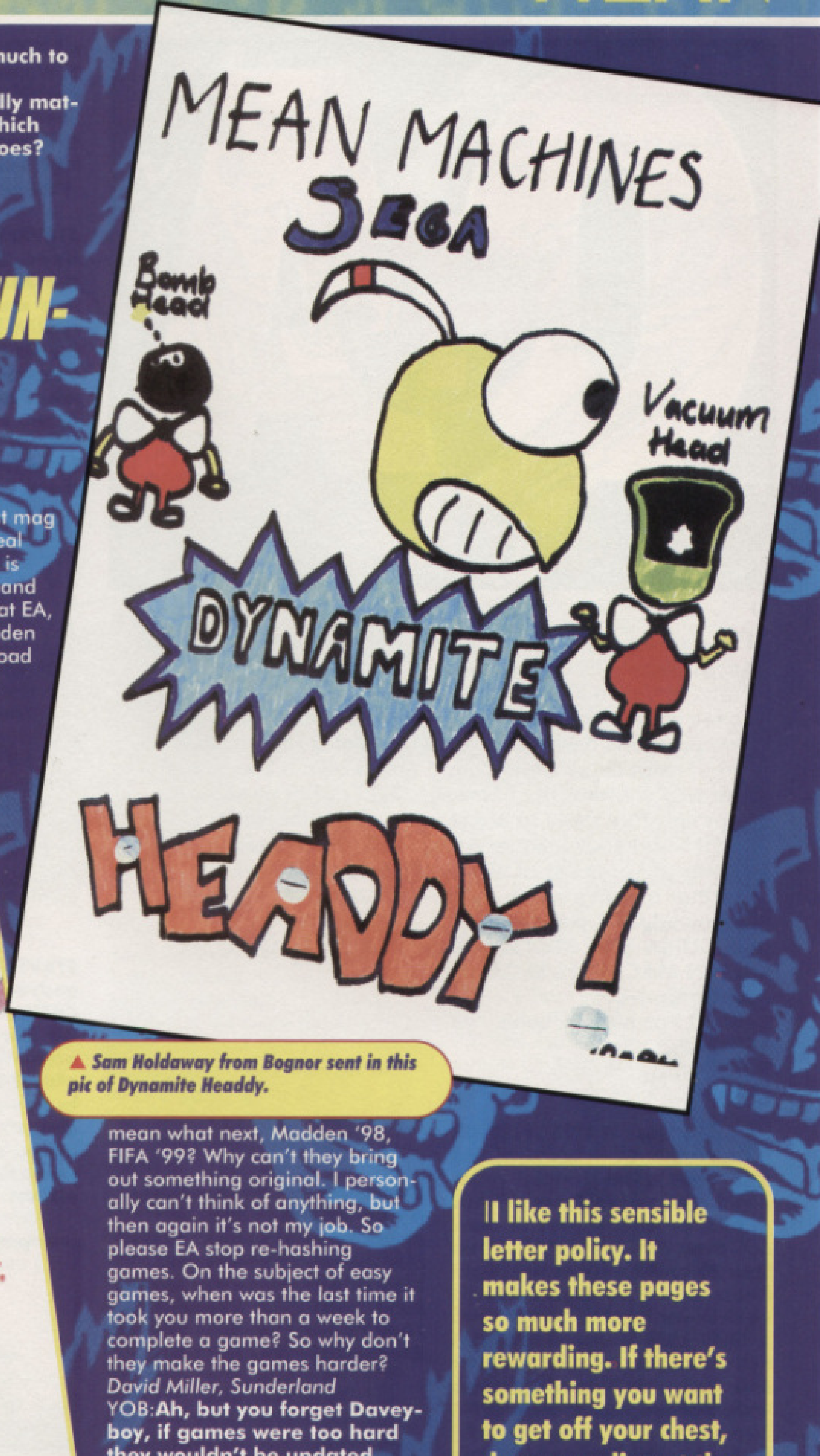
Dear Yob
I'll cut the crap about how good your mag is and get to the questions.
1. What should I buy Earthworm Jim, Super Street Fighter II, or Mortal Kombat 2?
2. What is your favourite game and how much is it?
3. What do you think is better Super NES or Megadrive?
4. What machine do you have and what games do you own?
Matthew Hoey, Perth, W Australia
YOB:**Dear Matthew, here are some questions for your Aussie noggin:**
1. Is the phrase 'Q&A' a little too high-brow for you?
2. I mean, it isn't too much to ask is it?
3. After all, does it really matter to you that much which games I like best? It does? Twister.
4. Can I go now?

PETER DUNCAN

Dear Yob
Your magazine is the best mag ever for a start, but the real reason I'm writing to you is about re-hashing games and how easy they are. Look at EA, FIFA, FIFA '95, John Madden '94, John Madden '95, Road Rash, and Road Rash 2. I mean what next, Madden '98, FIFA '99? Why can't they bring out something original. I personally can't think of anything, but then again it's not my job. So please EA stop re-hashing games. On the subject of easy games, when was the last time it took you more than a week to complete a game? So why don't they make the games harder?
David Miller, Sunderland
YOB:**Ah, but you forget Daveyboy, if games were too hard they wouldn't be updated every year! The simple answer to your question is, the EA games series will continue all the time people buy them. Somewhere out there is someone with every NHLPA, Madden and Road Rash title available. What a horrible, sad thought.**

▼ ***Why oh why are we printing this? And why, Ashton Hunt, did you send it in?***





▲ ***Sam Holdaway from Bognor sent in this pic of Dynamite Headdy.***

I like this sensible letter policy. It makes these pages so much more rewarding. If there's something you want to get off your chest, drop me a line at the address at the start of these pages, and I'll do the rest. Right, thyme to find a copy of MEAN MACHINES SAGE that berk was on about.... Ho ho.



I've noticed a trend in some of your letters. Before you get into the nitty-gritty of the numerically-ordered questions, there's a little opening line which bears no relevance whatsoever. I mean, in between the Earthworm Jim questions and MKII posers, we get stuff like 'As a big fan of oven chips could you...' and 'I own a small dog, and was wondering...' Strange. Still, not as strange as your constant need to know more about the same eight games and your bizarre wishes to have endless lists of games put in order of best to worst! Ah well, here's another month's worth, and send future entries to the hallowed Q&A pages to:
SATSUMA AND STOCKINGS SPECIAL, SIR? Q&A,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

INCH HIGH PRIVATE EYE

Dear Steve,
Please answer my questions or I'll kick your head in.
1. In February's issue of MMS, I noticed a cheat for FIFA '95. It took me half an hour to get it to work, but now I can't turn it off! Please help.
2. Do you think Sonic And Knuckles is crap?
3. Is Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker worth buying?
4. Will there be a FIFA '96 — if so, when?
5. I have got a Super NES and a Megadrive. Which is the best: Bomberman on the Super NES or Megadrive?

Andy Mercer, St Helens
STEVE:1. You can't y'hear! Hahahahaha! Alternatively, try putting the cheat in again to switch it off. 2. No, just hideously overrated. 3. Yup. 4. As sure as I'm sitting here. Next year, I reckon. 5. They're both good, but Mega Bomberman has the edge.

CHUGABOOM

Dear Steve,
I saw you on GamesMaster, do you actually enjoy appearing on that show? Anyway, please answer my questions.
1. Which is your favourite Megadrive RPG?
2. Will Virtua Racing Deluxe be released for the Megadrive?
3. Failing this, will another SVP chip game ever be released?
4. I have a Megadrive and 28 games (including VR, SFII, FIFA and MKII), it is worth me buying a 32X? I have the cash.
5. Which is the best game: SSFII, Rise Of The Robots, Fatal Fury II, Streets Of Rage III?
6. How good is Theme Park looking?

Davie Hay, Portknockie
STEVE:1. Story of Thor. 2. Nope. 3. Probably not now the 32X is out. 4. Depends how much you want a Saturn really. 5. SSFII. 6. Very. As for do I enjoy doing GamesMaster, yeah but you'd never believe it to look at me on the telly. Perhaps I should wear a hankie on my head and act like a tosser more.

WAIT 'TIL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME

Dear Steve,
I borrowed Mortal Kombat II off my mate Chris. I already knew the test mode cheats, but I wondered if you could tell me how to get Sonya, Kano and Goro. I have also heard that there are hidden characters called Pong and Ermac. Please can you tell me if they exist and how to get to them?

Adam Stevenson, Stourport-on-Severn
STEVE:Bloodybloodybloodybloodybloody hell! Look, you CANNOT be Sonya OR Kano OR Goro. Pong is a sub-game which appears if you play 50 games consecutively in two-player mode. Ermac doesn't exist. Now just go away, sad-lad. And before you ask, you can't be Kintaro either.



HONG KONG PHOOEY

Dear Steve,
Would you be so kind as to answer these questions for me?
1. Is there an official release date for the Saturn?
2. Will the V-Saturn be available in Europe?
3. Are Daytona USA and Virtua Racing coming out for the Saturn?
4. How much are we going to pay for the Saturn?
5. I bought MKII and SSFII, and I think MKII absolutely sucks and SSFII is kilometres better. Do you?
Also, I think you guys should review Sonic and Knuckles again because when you reviewed it you didn't play it with Sonic 2 and Sonic 3 plugged in. It is so much better when you play it with Sonic 3. I even think it is the best platformer ever!

Erik Kuijpers, Gemert, The Netherlands
STEVE:1. No. 2. Probably not. 3. Yep. 4. It hasn't been confirmed. 5. Nope, I reckon you're completely wrong. As for Sonic and Knuckles, having played it with all the varieties of Sonic we still reckon it isn't different enough and stand by what we said. And we like Dynamite Headdy.

HAIR BEAR BUNCH

Dear Steve,
I know you answer questions so well, so would you please answer mine.
1. Will these games be coming out for the Megadrive: Sensible World Of Soccer, Kevin Keegan Player Manager, Star Wars?
2. Will Mortal Kombat III be out for the Megadrive and Game Gear before 1996?
3. Do you think I would be wise to buy SSFII if I don't have Champion Edition?
4. Is the 32X as good as people make out?
5. Why are some Super NES games dearer than Megadrive ones?
6. My friend says that Rise Of The Robots is excellent, is he talking crap?
7. Why are the Power Rangers a waste of time?

E. McLerrol, Belfast
STEVE:1. Sensi will, but not for ages, the other two probably won't happen now. 2. Nope, probably not. 3. Yeah, it's only worth buying if you don't have the other. 4. It's by no means a next generation machine, but it's not a bad stop-gap. 5. Because Super NES graphics take up more memory and the MEGsize has to increase. 6. Yep. It is the biggest turd this side of a fat bloke's

backside. 7. You don't need me to answer that.

CAPTAIN CAVEMAN

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer these questions for me.
1. What is the best footy game for the Game Gear?
2. Is Micro Machines 2 coming out for the Game Gear?
3. Will Cannon Fodder be converted on to Game Gear?
4. Wil you put the following Game Gear games in order from best to worst: NBA Jam, MKII, Lion King, Rise Of The Robots, Robocop Vs Terminator?
5. Which of the Sonic games on the Game Gear is the best?
6. Which is your favourite Game Gear game?

David Thomas, Bridgend

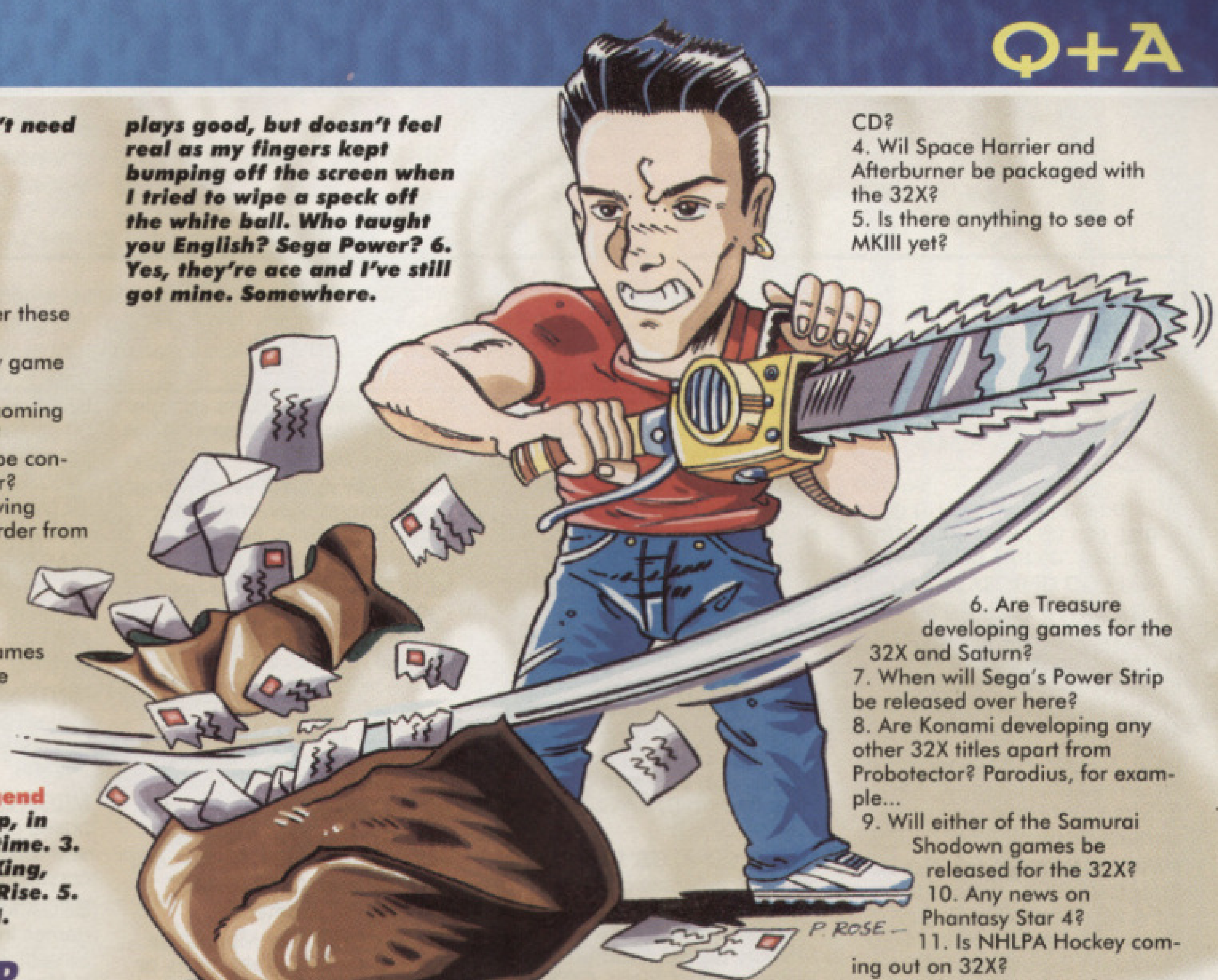
STEVE: 1. Sensi. 2. Yup, in about three months time. 3. Nope. 4. MKII, Lion King, Robo Vs Term, NBA, Rise. 5. The first one. 6. MKII.

UNDERCOVER ELEPHANT

Dear Steve,
I own a Megadrive, a Master System, and a crap Spectrum. Please answer my questions.
1. When is the next decent Master System game going to come out because most of them now are rubbish?
2. Why does Master System MKII only have six fighters when the Megadrive has twelve?
3. When will there be a decent footy game for the Master System, as both Kick Off and Champions Of Europe are old and boring?
4. Is Rise Of The Robots worth getting on the Megadrive?
5. I am a Snooker fan and I am thinking of buying Jimmy White Snooker for the Megadrive. Does it play good and feel real?
6. Do you think Spectrums are good?

Hugh Dakers, Dunoon

STEVE: 1. Never. The sooner the Master System finally kicks it the better if you ask me. 2. The same reason other Master System conversions do less, I expect. Perhaps it's something to do with the fact it's only half as powerful. 3. There won't be. 4. No, it is one of the worst games I have ever seen. 5. It plays good, but doesn't feel real as my fingers kept bumping off the screen when I tried to wipe a speck off the white ball. Who taught you English? Sega Power? 6. Yes, they're ace and I've still got mine. Somewhere.



COOL McCOOL

Dear Steve,
Here are a few questions I'd like you to answer for me before I go completely mad.
1. When is Demolition Man coming out for the Megadrive?
2. Could you please put these games in order of best to worst: Lion King, Bubsy 2, Red Zone?
3. Have you played Cliffhanger on the Megadrive.? What do you think of it?

Ross, Bosdorff, Leamington Spa

STEVE: 1. It has been scrapped for the Megadrive, but the Mega-CD version is still supposed to be coming out. Having seen the 3DO version, though, I wouldn't hold your breath. 2. Red Zone, Lion King, Bubsy 2. 3. I think it's awful — and I cannot believe they even thought of releasing a Mega-CD version, too.

TOUCHE TURTLE

Dear Steve,
Would you please answer these few questions for me?
1. Will The Punisher be officially released for the Megadrive?
2. If so, when?
3. If not, why not?
4. What is the worst fighting game you have seen?
5. please put these in order of best to worst: SSFII, Zero Tolerance, Dynamite Headdy, MKII, Earthworm Jim, Art Of Fighting.

Richard Hall, Halifax

STEVE: 1. It hasn't been confirmed. 2. Marubeni have only just signed up a deal to release Capcom's games and it hasn't been confirmed if Punisher is one of them. 3. Oh, sod off. 4. Rise Of The Robots. 5. MKII, Earthworm Jim, Dynamite Headdy, SSFII, Zero Tolerance, Art Of Fighting.

ARABIAN NIGHTS

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer the following questions as I am desperate to know the answers.
1. Do you think Earthworm Jim 1 or 2 will appear for the 32X?
2. Is it true that the SF movie is being made into a game?
3. Could Virtua Fighter and Daytona be released for the 32X CD?
4. Wil Space Harrier and Afterburner be packaged with the 32X?
5. Is there anything to see of MKIII yet?
6. Are Treasure developing games for the 32X and Saturn?
7. When will Sega's Power Strip be released over here?
8. Are Konami developing any other 32X titles apart from Probotector? Parodius, for example...
9. Will either of the Samurai Shodown games be released for the 32X?
10. Any news on Phantasy Star 4?
11. Is NHLPA Hockey coming out on 32X?
12. Are there any plans for a 32X modem in the UK?
13. Will enhanced versions of Shining Force or Soleil come out for the 32X?
14. Are Tecnhosoft developing games for the 32X?
15. Will there be any Shinobi or Streets Of Rage games for the 32X?

Marcus Barnes, Brockley

STEVE: 1. EWJ II may well, but the first probably won't. Shiny haven't indicated they're working on one, any way. 2. Yep, it'll be on 32X and will feature MK-style digitised sprites lifted from the film. 3. VF is, but Daytona is unconfirmed. 4. Nope. 5. Nope. 6. Yep, but nothing they've released details about. 7. It won't. 8. All Konami's stuff now looks likely to go straight to Saturn, but includes a conversion of Ultimate Parodius from the Playstation and International Superstar Soccer. Which I'm brilliant at, by the way. I even won the EMAP tournament. 9. Probably not. 10. Nope. 11. Yep. 12. Nope. 13. No, but other RPGs are being planned. 14. Dunno, they've gone real quiet recently. 15. Nope.

MEGAMART

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I WILL swap Sonic 2, D.Robinson Basketball, Decapattack, Wrestle War for O.K. games. Phone Simon 0944 738421 after 4pm.

GAME GEAR, carry case, MS converter, magnifier, adaptor, Sonic 2, Lemmings, Halley Wars, Golf and Columns. Only £60. Phone 01480 382058.

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WANTED PENPAL aged 11-13. I am called Andrew and enjoy drawing and playing computer games. If interested write to Andrew Carr, Clawthorpe Lodge, Burton, Carnforth, Lancs LA6 1NX. Include photo is possible.

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